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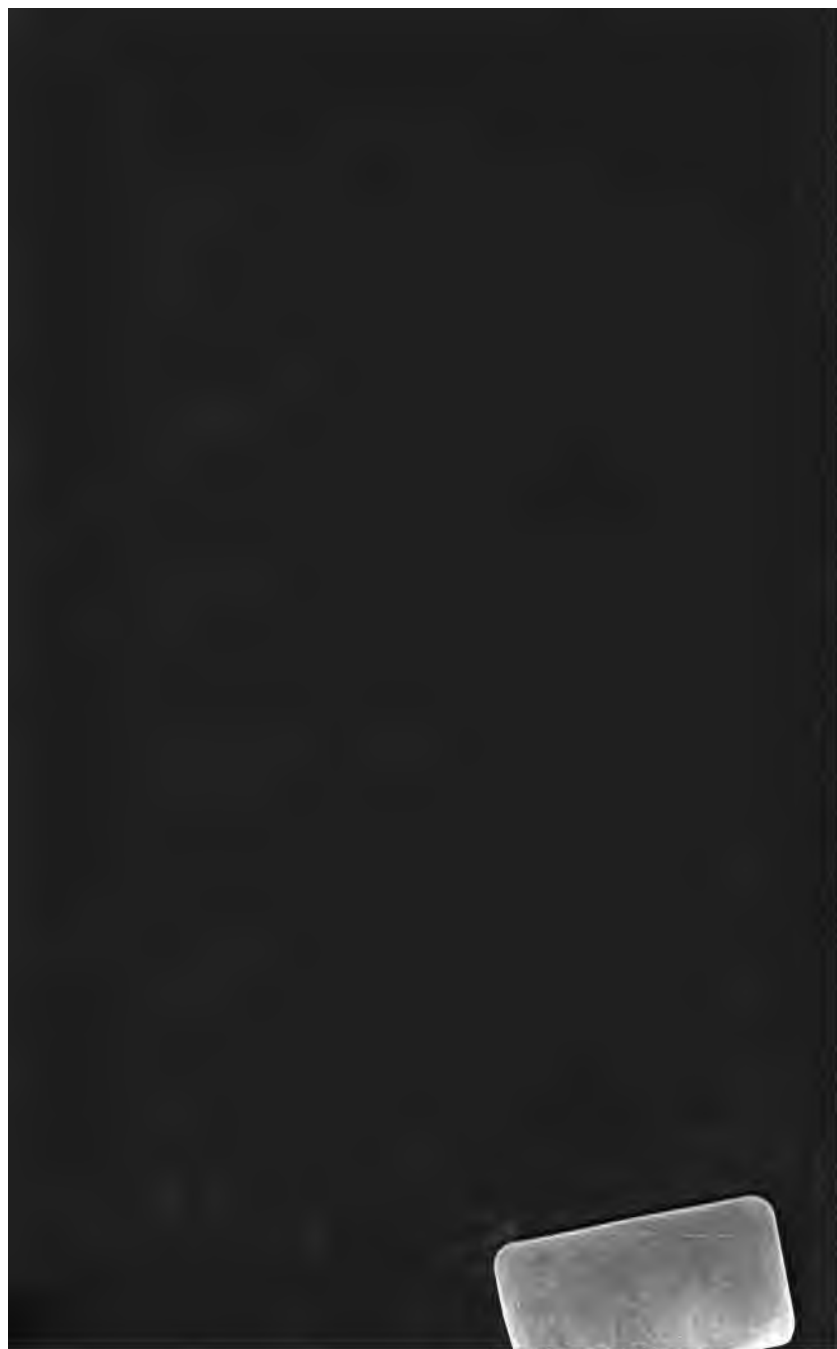
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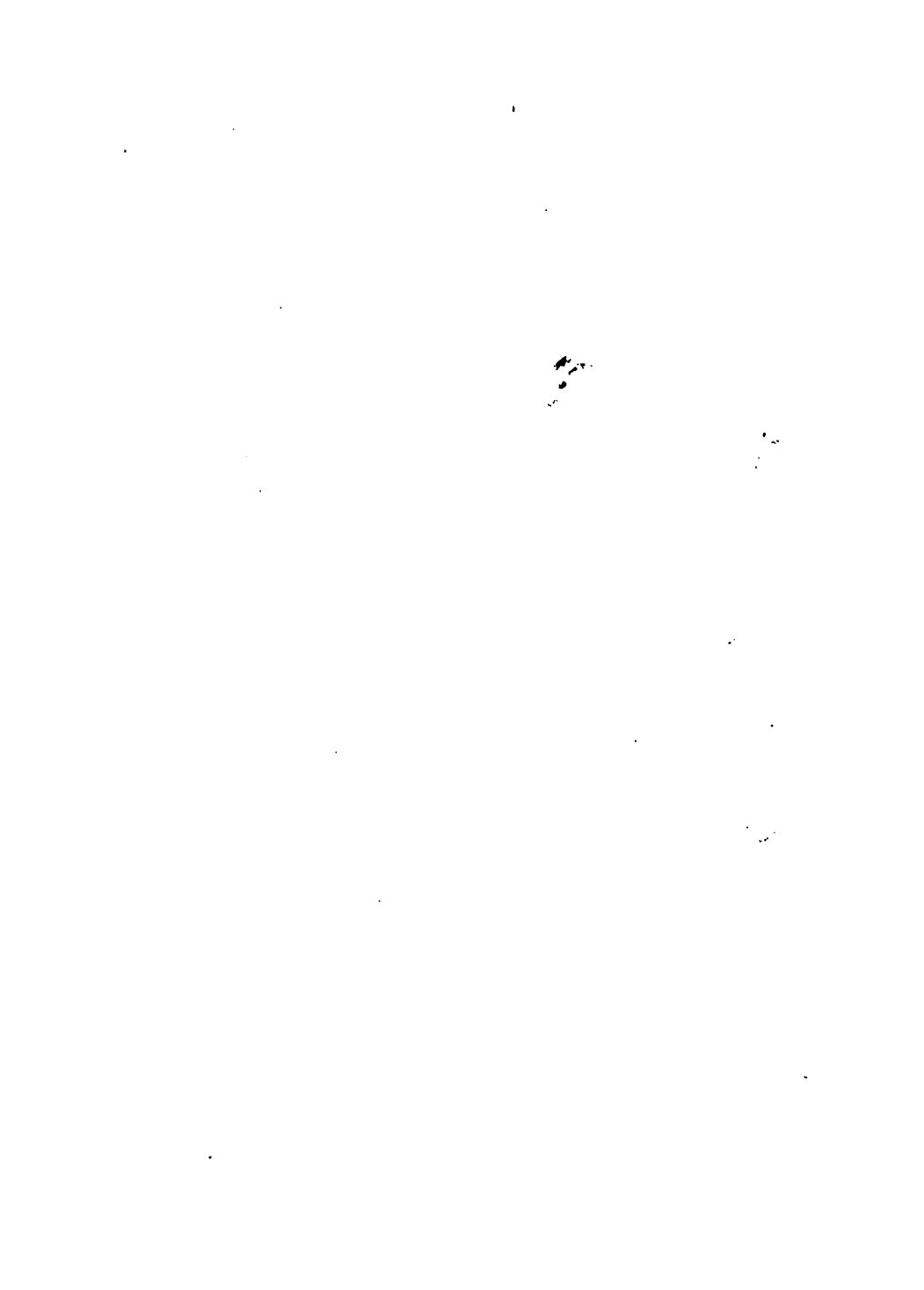
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ECHOES OF THE BIBLE.





# ECHOES OF THE BIBLE.

BY

FRANCIS PINNEY.

AUTHOR OF "THE VOICE OF A LAYMAN," AND

"THE VILLAGE PULPIT."

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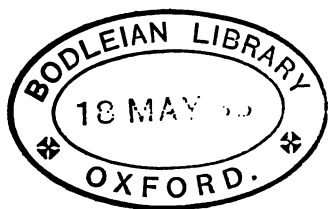
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## NOTE.

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The object of this publication is the circulation of religious truth. During the coming year many of the fundamental topics of our common faith will be published.

The author earnestly invites the support and co-operation of the Christian public to aid him in his work.

For past and future success, to God be all the praise.

*Stamford, December 1st, 1871.*



## C O N T E N T S .

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	PAGE.
1. The Word of God ; or, how came the Scriptures	1
2. Secret Things and Things Revealed ; or, Why we have a Bible ... ..	13
3. Moses and the Prophets ; or, the Sufficiency of Divine Revelation ... ..	25
4. Duty in Relation to Truth ; or, the Form of Sound Words ... ..	37
5. God ; or, the First Person in the Trinity ... ..	49
6. God ; or, the Attributes of the Deity ... ..	60
7. God ; or, Manifold Wisdom ... ..	75
8. Sovereign Right ; or, God's Spiritual Propriety ...	85
9. Prophetic Teaching ; or, the Soul Sufferings and Success of Messiah ... ..	93
10. My Father's Business ; or, Christ's Consecration and Ours ... ..	101
11. The First Commandment ; or, Following Jesus ...	109
12. The Blessedness of Obedience ; or, the Reward of Good Works ... ..	121



# Echoes of the Bible.

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## I.

### THE WORD OF GOD; OR, HOW CAME THE SCRIPTURES.

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"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."

"See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh." HEB. i. 1-2, xii. 25.

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"There is one God, and there is none other than He." The existence of a glorious God is beyond all reasonable doubt. Design shows the existence of a designer; effects, the existence of a great first cause; plans, the mind of a superior by whom the plans were made. The watch is the evidence of the existence of the watchmaker. The house proves the priority of the builder. The book is the evidence of the personality and intelligence of the author. Creation manifests the existence of a Creator; things visible reveal His power and Godhead. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork."

Almighty God resolved to create a race of beings in His own image and after His own likeness. They were to be like Himself in the spirituality of their being, in the purity of their nature, and in their intellectual endowments. He

created and placed His offspring amid the glories of a perfect paradise. He put man under His own rule, and surrounded him with providential blessings. Man sinned against his Maker, but He did not forsake him. He continued to the sinful race every needful mercy, and high in the scale of precious gifts was the revelation of His will. God made known to man what nature could not teach, and what reason could not discover. We have now in our hands a book, pre-eminently the Book of books. It was before all others, and is above all others. This divine gift and infallible guide has a claim upon the attention and reception of all mankind. "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh."

*The word of God was an essential gift.* God never does what is needless, and He never bestows what is useless. There is not an unserviceable atom in creation, each particle of matter fills its place and fulfils its purpose. There is not one dead letter, nor obsolete law in the universe ; and there are no enactments, but such that regulate the worlds of matter and of mind. In providence there are many gifts ; the largest and the smallest are designed to meet some creature want. Man is a moral agent, and needs a rule of moral action. Unaided reason is fallible and uncertain. Human opinions vary, and want authority to rule them. Where there is no revelation doctrines differ, and morals are corrupt. All that is known of sacred things must be traced to a divine origin. Nature does not supply theological instruction ; does not teach how man may be saved ; and does not guide us in the nature of true and acceptable worship. A supernatural communication is essential to the instruction of the mind and the correction of morals. It is needful as an infallible guide through life to immortality. The Father of mercies has spoken to mankind, and all that is essential to be known or done is plainly revealed.

*The revelation of the divine mind was possible.* Admit the existence of God, His Almighty power and guiding pre-

sence, and every idea of difficulty is banished. Mind can influence mind. The mind of man can influence the mind of his fellow man: it can convey ideas, awaken thoughts, and stir up emotions. God the great Spirit can influence the universal mind. In the exercise of divine prerogative He has stirred and taught the minds of men in all ages. We can trace back to the great source of intelligence, ideas, and doctrines essential to man's mental and spiritual profit.

*It was highly probable that God would reveal His will.* He had given an incomplete revelation in nature, and it was likely from what we knew of Him in creation and providence that He would complete His disclosures to mankind. Analogy suggests the probability that He would do it. A kind parent cares for the mental and moral culture of his children, and he provides for the instruction and training of his offspring. A Sovereign will give laws to his subjects for the protection of life, liberty, and property. Therefore it is reasonable to suppose that the kind and universal parent would give to His offspring a knowledge of His will; and that the great Sovereign would give to the world laws to regulate action. That He would provide for every necessity, supply every mental craving and earnest desire of the heart. In the productions of the divine mind it was probable there would be mysteries which finite minds could not understand, which must be received by man and interpreted by God's good spirit. It is also reasonable to suppose that the book would be without contradiction and without error; and that it would be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And it was likely that God would reveal His will in the way the Scriptures assert; that He would speak to men "at sundry time and in divers manners."

*God has actually spoken to mankind.* We pass from possibility and probability to fact. The silence of eternity has been broken. The Creator's voice has been heard. The Father of mercies has expressed His kindest thoughts "God

has spoken once, yea twice," said Elihu. He has far exceeded the numerical statement of Job's friend. God has been heard in the silent voice of nature and in the changing scenes of providence. The voice of God has been heard in the inmost soul of man. The Lord spake in times past to special men for special work. To Moses He said, when giving His permission to employ Aaron, "Thou shalt speak unto him and put words in his mouth, and I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do ; and he shall be thy spokesman unto the people ; and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God." At a subsequent period just before the giving of the law, the Lord said to Moses, "Lo I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever." Before the statutes and judgments given to Israel stands this formula, "And the Lord spake unto Moses," and at the end of his ministry it is written, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." Balaam said, "Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth." David adds his testimony, "The Spirit of the Lord spake to me, and His word was in my tongue." The prophets in opening their mission declared, "The word of the Lord came unto me." They claim for themselves divine teaching, and in the delivery of their message divine authority. The prophets could say, "Truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment and of might." "All scripture," or every part of scripture, "is given by inspiration." Prophecy came not in old time by the will of men ; but holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." He spake by the mouth of David, and revealed His will by Esaias the prophet. The Spirit of truth was sent by the Father to guide into all truth ; and the word which

we have heard and received is not the word of man ; but is in truth the word of God.

*God has spoken at sundry times.* God spake to man in the world's fresh dawn, when innocence walked in Eden ; again when sin entered and the obedient child became the guilty rebel. Through successive ages and generations there was the exercise of the Sovereign's prerogative and the voice of the Father's love. He suited His progressive revelations to the true character and circumstances of His people. The period of divine revelations extended over three thousand five hundred years. The first words were addressed to sinless Adam, the first man ; the final communication to Malachi, the last of the Jewish prophets.

*God has spoken in divers manners.* There is only one divine instructor of mankind, and one source of inspiration and knowledge. The one Divine Teacher has employed a variety of ways in revealing His will : by direct communication, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, by dreams, and by visions. The audible voice of God was heard, and His voice was known to Moses. " God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said here am I." To Moses " The Lord spake face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." Moses was a partaker of divine revelation when awake, and he prophesied without the mediation of Angels, by an influence immediately from God. The Lord called Samuel, " and he answered here am I." Again Samuel said, " Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth." Isaiah heard the voice of God in the temple, and from Him received a royal commission to the people. The Lord said to Jeremiah, " I have sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. And whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces." The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, in the land of the Chaldeans, by the river Chebar." Hosea and Joel heard Him speak, and Jonah received his commission, " Arise, go to

Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it." Micah saw things concerning Samaria and Jerusalem in the days of the Kings of Judah.

*God spake to men in dreams.* When the senses were locked up the soul was awake to communion with God and to expressions of His will. Elihu said, "For God speaketh once, yea twice, in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction." Dreams were the earliest mode of divine communication to the soul. God spake to Jacob in a dream. He addressed his servant by name, and he said, "Here am I." And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brethren, and his dream was prophetic. And Pharoah had a dream of the future condition of Egypt, which was interpreted by Joseph. In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." The will of God was made known to Daniel in a dream; "And Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." The prophet declares "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions."

*The Lord instructed men by visions as well as in dreams.*

"If there be a prophet among you, I, the Lord, will make myself known to him by visions." To the minds of men God presented grand symbolic representations, and taught them lessons by these scenic scenes. Isaiah saw visions concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Ezekiel said, "I was among the captives by the river Chebar, that the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God." Sometimes the prophets are said to stand upon a watch-tower to descry future events. Habakkuk said, "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And the Lord answered me and said, write the vision, and make it

plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry." God will speak in the appointed manner, and shall not go beyond the time appointed. Truth shall burst forth like the sun from behind the cloud.

*In the earliest days God spake to man in simple words, to guide and regulate the family. His first revealings were adapted to the patriarchy. Time moved on, and God resolved to elect and call a people for Himself and for His glory. He separated the Jews from the nations of the world. He established a kingdom, and raised up leaders, judges, and kings, and He gave them wise instructors and wholesome laws. The voice of God was heard in daily teaching. He inspired the ancient bards, and they wrote in verse what impressed the national mind. Proverbs were suggested, and we have more than three thousand gems of sacred wisdom, each embodying some great truth more valuable than gold or precious stones. God's voice was heard in prophecy. He read the future and revealed what should take place in after ages. Promises clear and distinct were given to His people, containing assurances of present and future blessings. Disobedience did not pass unnoticed; the transgressor was observed, his sin was re-proved, and his punishment was threatened. The words of God were given in parts to men, and afterwards combined into one volume of sacred truth.*

*God spake in time past to the fathers by the prophets. The world's gray fathers were first addressed. The old men in the patriarchal age and under the Mosaic dispensation; the heads of families, judges, kings, and people who had long since passed away. God spake to the fathers by the prophets. These men were taken from "the schools of the prophets," or from the sons of the prophets. Some were selected from the ordinary occupations of life and inspired to reveal the will of*

God. They were men of holy character, men of prayer and devotedness to the service of the Lord. God raised up a succession of these holy men. Prophets flourished before the giving of the law, and prophets flourished under the law. There were prophets in the desert—as Moses, Aaron, and the several elders. There were prophets in Canaan—Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Hosea, Amos, Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah. Prophets during the captivity—Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Zacharias, Simeon, and John the Baptist prepared the way for the great prophet Christ Jesus. These holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. They carried their credentials with them and gave full proof that they were sent of God. They were Ambassadors of God, and the messengers of his will. They reprovèd what was wrong, and commended what was right. They instructed the people in the doctrines of religion, and were their guides in morals. The future was open to their view, and they foretold what should take place in after ages. They declared the rise and fall of empires. They spoke of a coming king and of a spiritual kingdom that should have no end. They gave their united testimony to Jesus, “To Him gave all the prophets witness.” They were leaders of the public mind, and authorities in all matters of religion. They were faithful in the discharge of their duty ; they reprovèd kings and subjects in the name of the Lord. They fulfilled their mission, and one after another they passed away. They died and were buried, and now they wait the general resurrection. The truth they uttered yet lives, and shall live on to the end of time. They are still leaders of thought, instructors of the people, and guides

in all the verities of religion. We have Moses and the prophets, let us hear them.

*God has spoken in these last days by His Son.* Time moves on and dispensations close. The patriarchal and Mosaic times were ended. A new and better dispensation dawned. The last period of the world is come. The patriarchal dispensation opened with Adam, and closed when Moses received commission to form a nation and give the law. The Mosaic dispensation ended when Christ came to establish the kingdom of which He is lawgiver and head. The last dispensation is the brightest and the best in the clearness of its light, in the extent of its privileges, and in the dignity of its teacher. "God in these last times has spoken to us by His Son." No longer does God speak by dreams, by visions, or by angel visits, but by the Lord from heaven. The full and final revelation of the mind of God to man was by Christ Jesus. He came from God, He knew the mind of God, and He came to reveal the will of God. God was in Him and with Him, and when men heard His voice they heard the voice of God. He was full of grace and truth. Christ was pre-eminently a talker. He did not write a book, but He delivered many sermons. He went from place to place preaching the gospel of the kingdom. He did not come to expound Moses and the prophets; but to give us new revelations of the character and mind of God. There was authority, dignity, and majesty in His utterances, for "Never man spake like this man." There was originality in His discourses, for Moses and the prophets might sit at His feet and learn. He gave freshness to old revelations, and added greatly to the funds of divine information. The themes of his preaching were spiritual. He declared the spirituality

of God, and enforced the obligation of divine worship. He set forth the unearthly nature of His own kingdom and the necessity of a change in the human heart. He gave the true spiritual interpretation of the divine laws. The teaching of Christ was pre-eminently practical. The divine right of God was asserted. His own claim to discipleship was urged. The relationships and duties of daily life were defined and enforced. He gave a code of laws of the purest morality, and enjoined upon mankind the great lessons of humanity, benevolence, forbearance, and love. He cheered men by His promises, and gave pure motives to stimulate action. He provided to meet all the deep necessities of man. His sayings were texts, and his life was teaching by example. Christ Jesus addressed mankind in many capacities. He spoke as a king. In His own name He addressed His subjects, and commanded loyalty to His person and to His laws. He spoke as a legislator, and gave laws from heaven for life on earth. His code was suited to every rank and age. He spoke as a teacher. He opened His mouth and taught old men and little children, the ignorant and the wise, the poor and the rich, the curious and the inquiring, the sorrowful and the joyous. All classes and conditions of mind clustered round Him and listened to the gracious words that fell from His lips. He spoke as a friend and brother. There was love in His heart, gentleness in His spirit, and tenderness in His words. To the weary He said, "Come unto me ;" to His disciples, "Ye are my friends ;" to the active, "Lo I am with you always ;" to the concerned about worldly things, "The hairs of your head are all numbered ;" and to all He said, "I am come that ye might have life." "He that believeth on the Son hath life." God has spoken by His Son, He is the last divine teacher, and His words,

the final revelation. We have one Bible in two Testaments, together they have striking points of analogy and contrast. The first Testament was written by Moses and the prophets, and the second was spoken by the Son of God. We cannot tell you all his words, nor tabulate His many subjects. What He said is for our instruction. "He that hath ears to hear let him hear."

*Christ has a claim upon the attention of mankind.* "Refuse not Him that speaketh." The right of Jesus is founded in the divinity of His character and in the importance of His instruction. He is God's Son, the appointed heir of all things, and He has doctrines to teach, and precepts to enjoin, and promises to give, such as never fell from human lips. God has come down and spoken in the words of Jesus of Nazareth. The ear must open and the heart be ready to receive His heavenly message. From heaven God has bidden us listen to his Son. "Hear ye Him." Hear ye Him, as an anxious inquirer after truth, and He will instruct you in all the doctrines and duties of religion. Hear ye him, as a child of man, and He will teach you about earthly duty, for He has words for parents, children, masters, servants, friends, and enemies. Hear ye Him as a child of sin : for He will teach you the way of salvation through the love of God, and by faith in Himself. Hear ye Him as a child of God, and He will teach you the origin, progress, and perfection of spiritual life. He will lead you to living fountains and an eternal home. Hear ye Him as a child of sorrow, for He will reveal to your troubled heart the way of peace. "Ye believe God, believe also in me." "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, and in all wisdom." Christ is a teacher of exalted rank and dignity of character, and His words are unparalleled, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest

12 THE WORD OF GOD ; OR, HOW CAME THE SCRIPTURES.

heed to the things we have heard." The truths of religion cannot profit without your personal reception. Give them your strictest attention ; let not business engross you ; be not attracted by pleasure ; suffer not favourable opportunities to pass away ; defer not until to-morrow what should be done to-day. Neglect will prove your ruin. "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him?" Inattention to the words of the Son of God is a sin that shall not pass unpunished. "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth ; much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven."

# Echoes of the Bible.

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## II.

### SECRET THINGS AND THINGS REVEALED;

OR,

### WHY WE HAVE A BIBLE.

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“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God : but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.”—DEUT. xxix. 29.

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Man is naturally an inquiring being. Prompted by a spirit of curiosity, or animated by a thirst for knowledge, he endeavours to extend his researches and acquire new ideas. Inquiry begins with the dawn of intellect and the power of articulation, and continues in the prying curiosity and repeated questions of childhood and of youth. The desire for knowledge lasts through life, and is sought in the minute and extended investigations of matured manhood.

The pursuit of knowledge is laudable, and is commended by the highest authority. “Also, that the soul be without knowledge is not good.” It is the right and proper possession of the soul, for mind must be developed, expanded, and enriched with the treasures of knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge refines, elevates, and satisfies the soul. As food is adapted

to the appetite, as light is adapted to the eye, as sound is adapted to the ear, so is divine knowledge adapted to meet the desires of the mind. Knowledge is better than silver or gold, and for the attainment of it man must live and labour. Man's busy life must not be spent in a restless race for riches, or a fierce battle for bread. Our knowledge must be of the highest order, not the mere dazzle and show of intellect, but religious knowledge. We must know God, know His works, know His word. We must know ourselves, our character, our calling, and our destiny. Our knowledge must lead to practical, happy, and eternal results.

There are many facilities for the attainment of knowledge. Vast and interesting regions are opened for the excursions of intellect and the contemplations of piety. Nature is open, Providence is open, the Bible is open. Into the vast temple of nature we may enter, a temple crowded with every variety of object; each invested with interest and instruction. Sun, moon, and stars; oceans, rivers, and springs; mountains, valleys, and plains; gardens, fields, and forests; trees, flowers, and fruits; beast, birds, and reptiles: all teach the presence, power, and goodness of God. The events of providence are passing in review before us and teach the same great lessons. The Bible is open, and we can read God's glorious revelation of Himself. The press is teeming with the productions of man's busy brain. We have a world of books, and we breathe an atmosphere of knowledge. Man makes an onward march in mental pursuits. He is daily trying some new experiment, making some new discovery, acquiring some new ideas, and increasing his intellectual wealth. Man's knowledge is very great; but few subjects are hidden from his view or placed beyond his reach.

There *are* boundary lines over which man *cannot* pass, and regions he cannot explore. There *are* mysteries he *cannot* unravel, depths he *cannot* fathom, heights he *cannot* climb, breadths he *cannot* grasp. God has been pleased to check the curiosity of man and prescribe the limits of his knowledge. There are secrets which God has reserved to Himself. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God : but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever."

*There is a limit with respect to our knowledge of God and divine things.* "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God." Secret things are things that exist but are not revealed ; facts, but facts that are not explained. There are many things known by the people of God that are hidden from the unconverted. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." "His secret is with the righteous." There are many things which neither the sinner nor the saint can fully understand. We know but little of God, of His works, and of His ways. That there is a God is a fact beyond all reasonable doubt. He has revealed Himself in His works, in His providence, and in His word. We look at the sun by day and the stars by night, and they all speak of the existence and power of the invisible God. We walk the earth and see the labour of His hands and the impress of His feet. The events of providence tell us of His presence and the constancy of His superintending care. On every page of the Bible we can see the face of God and can read His glorious attributes. Creation, providence, and the Bible are full of God. Though God has revealed Himself we know but little of Him. Zophar said, "Canst thou by searching find out God ? Canst thou know the Almighty to perfection ? It is as high as heaven ; what canst thou do ? deeper than hell ;

what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." God is infinite, and therefore finite man cannot comprehend or understand Him in all His perfections. "God is a spirit." Only God knows Himself in the spirituality of His essence, and the mystery of His own being. "God inhabits eternity." "He is from everlasting to everlasting." He is a being without origination, without change, and without decay. He exists in Himself and from Himself. He exists through endless duration, and a thousand years to Him are as one day. How a being can live unchanged through the past, present, and future is a "secret thing." Man cannot measure eternal duration, nor span immensity. God is present in every place. "Do not I fill heaven and earth saith the Lord?" Not sitting in the centre and surveying the circumference, but filling all space, the heaven above, and the earth beneath, without displacing one particle of matter. We can understand a being moving with rapidity from place to place, but how is it that He is present with every moving planet, every floating atom, and every living being; that He guides all things by His power, and knows all things necessary and contingent? These things we cannot comprehend, they are "secret things and belong to the Lord our God."

There are three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; yet "there is one God, and none other than He." We cannot understand how plurality and unity can be combined—three infinities, equal in duration, presence, power, and works, and yet but one eternal, omnipresent, Almighty creator of all things. The Trinity is a mystery. The mode of divine existence is a "secret thing that belongs to the Lord our God."

We know not the place of the divine abode. "Heaven is God's throne." But where is heaven? There may be some special locality where God more fully reveals His glory, but we know it not. God, the Great Sovereign, has plans and purposes, decrees and laws, but we know them not: they are varied, wise, vast, deep, unfathomable, such as neither man nor angel can understand, for "His ways are past finding out."

Descend from the contemplation of God to the study of His works. There is much to excite our loving admiration; but there is much we cannot understand. We hear also about the plain teaching of nature, but we find nature has her secrets, which man vainly endeavours to find out. Philosophers can tell us the number, distance, and magnitude of the stars; but who can tell us of what they are composed, and whether inhabited, and if so, by whom? There may be worlds also whose rays have not yet reached us, which have shone in their own splendour through thousands of years. The globe on which we live has its secrets, you may try and torture nature but it is in vain. There is mystery both in the departments of matter and of mind. The blade of grass grows, and the flower blooms in our garden, each assimilates to its own nature and grows and retains its identity, but how? Man cannot fully understand the mysteries of his own being. Though he knows that he is a marvellous compound of flesh and spirit, that he has a frail body and a thinking ruling mind, yet he cannot tell the bond by which these opposite natures are united, nor how mind influences matter. We raise the arm by the volition of the will, but how the mind operates is "a secret thing."

We turn our thoughts to providence and rejoice in the revelation of the fact, "The Lord reigneth." The world moves under His direction and control, and all events happen by His permission. There are laws for the government of the physical and intellectual world; but in providence there are secret things. We talk of the government of

the natural world by the laws of gravitation, what is gravitation ? Events take place that astonish and perplex our minds. We ask a hundred or more questions, to which we get no definite answer. From whence came the origin of evil ? Why was sin permitted to enter into the world ? How did sinless angels become corrupt beings, and why are they permitted to oppose God and man ? Why was the great apostate spirit permitted to enter paradise and beguile the sinless pair ? Why is sin, and woe, and death permitted to reign as the result of one man's transgression ? Why are men appointed to ceaseless toil, some with a mind racked with care, and others doomed to labour through life like a beast of burden ? Why the inequality of life, one born to high destiny, living in luxury, and another toiling through life in labour and poverty ? Why does one enjoy the constant flow of health and happiness, and another suffer affliction and sorrow ? Why is one nation elevated to the enjoyment of the blessings of civilization and religion, and another degraded and left in heathen darkness ? Why is the sinner permitted to live and prosper in business, to rise high in society, and have influence over his fellow-man, and the child of God to struggle with difficulty ? Why is the sinner permitted to live out his three-score years, a tyrant, a moral pest, a man that never rose above self-interest and the gratification of his passions and appetites, and the youth of promise to be nipped like a flower in the bud and sent to an early grave ? Why are promises and predictions so long before they are fulfilled ? The better days foretold, why do they tarry ? Why are not the threatenings of the Lord executed ? Why is not prayer at once answered, and effort crowned with present visible blessing ? Why is not sin destroyed, Satan arrested, and the millennial glory diffused over the world ? We ask the questions, but God gives no account of His matters. "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God."

*Religion, too, has her secrets. The mystery of godli-*

ness is Christ manifested in the flesh. The Eternal an infant, the Omnipresent contracted to a span. Christ, God with God, man with man. Equal with God, but made a little lower than the angels. Two distinct natures, but one person. There is mystery in His person, mystery in His life, and mystery in His death. Why should incarnate God be poor ; the rightful owner of all things without a place to lay His head. Why should innocence take the place of the guilty ? Why should holiness be despised and goodness rejected of men, and why should Omnipotence submit to cruelty and murder ? Jesus is now an enthroned King, why then does He not break the power of the oppressor and reign without a rival ? Christ has sent the Holy Ghost to fill His place and to do His work. He is given to convince of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come ; to effect an inward change equal to a new creation. How does the divine Spirit operate upon the human spirit ? How does He convince, convert, and create anew ? There is a better inheritance for the soul, but we know not where. This life must close, but we know not when. The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, but we know not the day. The saint shall be like his glorified Lord, but we know not what is meant by a glorified body. There is a last day, when the world shall be judged in righteousness, but we know not the time. Men are to live beyond the grave in hell or heaven. Where is hell, and what is it ? Where is the locality of heaven, what is the occupation of the glorified, and what are the elements of their joy ? "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God."

*The Bible is plain, but yet obscure* : there are truths a child can read and understand ; there are also depths the learned divine cannot fathom. In things essential, truth is brought down to the average mind : the book, as a whole, is not easy to understand. Many statements are there that have no explanations—doctrines stated that are not expounded—promises given that are not fulfilled—precepts written that are

not enforced—threatenings recorded that are not executed. "These are secret things that belong to the Lord our God." He knows all about them, and the reason why they are not accomplished. They are God's property and He will not give them up. God displays His sovereign right by withholding, and His Fatherly goodness by just adapting His teaching to our capacity and necessity. What is difficult to the child is easy to the man ; and what puzzled in early life is clear to advanced age and intellect. Little by little God deals out truth, according to human capacity and need. The keeping back of secret things tries our faith, tests our patience, teaches our ignorance, humbles our pride, and stimulates our inquiries. We must pursue our studies and wait for the interpretation. What we know not now, we shall know hereafter.

*Things revealed are designed for our personal possession and practical use.* We have a revelation of the mind of God—a supernatural communication of the Divine mind to the mind of man, teaching us what was beyond the discovery of our unaided reason. God has revealed the truth, and our minds are to be employed in the study and interpretation of truth. God has given man a copy of His will in two volumes, first the book of nature, and second the Bible. In creation the name of God is written. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard :—The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul ; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right rejoicing the heart ; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." *Revelation is essential to instruct mankind.* The Father's voice that sounded in the ears of Adam in Paradise is needful to instruct and call back a world that has gone astray from Him. *Revelation was progressive.* Ages rolled on from the first word of God to the last divine utterance of truth. The

patriarchs were addressed, and the prophets inspired : these holy men instructed the fathers of the early church. In these last days God has spoken to us by His Son. *Revelation is complete.* Beginning with Genesis and ending with Revelation. Opening with the sublime announcement, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and closing with the final benediction, "Behold I come quickly ; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Nothing is to be taken from it ; nothing is to be added to it ; no human additions by the dogmas of the church, the pride of reason, or the dreams of fanatics. *Revelation is varied in its contents.* It is a book of laws, lives, voyages, and travels. It is a book of history, poetry, and prophecy. It is a book of doctrines, precepts, promises, and threatenings. Here are shallows for the infant mind, and depths for giant intellect to explore. *Revelation is all-sufficient.* It is the book of books, the oracle of oracles, the beacon of beacons. It is the child's companion ; the poor man's treasury ; the instructor of the foolish ; the teacher of the wise ; the guide of the philosopher ; the rule of the judge ; the law of the king ; the text book of the divine ; the directory of the perplexed ; the comfort of the mourner ; the joy of the believer ; the sick man's health ; the dying man's life ; it will be the study of eternal ages in heaven.

*The Bible is a revelation of God ;* that He is, and what He is ; the eternal, self-existing, almighty, omnipresent, and omniscient being : that He is holy, just, merciful, and true. *It is a revelation of Jesus Christ,* in the divinity of His person and the mystery of His incarnation. It reveals Him as our Prophet, Priest, and King. *It is a revelation of the Holy Ghost ;* in His personality and divinity ; and as teacher, guide, and comforter. *It is a revelation of man ;* in his origin, constitution, relationship, and destiny. Only the Bible gives the true history of man : apart from its teachings there are opposite and false conclusions. One elevates him to

a god, another debases him to a brute : one gives to his reason a sovereignty, another makes him the slave of habit : one assigns to him an immortality of being, another consigns him to an eternal sleep. *It is a revelation of redemption.* We are taught that redemption had its origin in the love of God ; its foreshadowings in types ; its revealings in promises and predictions ; its procuring merit in the bloodshedding of Jesus. *It is a revelation of the plan of salvation.* We learn from it that salvation had its origin in the grace of God ; its meritorious cause in Jesus ; its instrumental means—faith in the one Saviour. It answers the great question, "What must I do to be saved?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." It tells us how we are to live : "Follow peace with all men ; and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." It tells us how to act : "Do good to all men ; but especially to them who are of the household of faith." *It is a revelation of the future ;* "Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel." It sheds light beyond the tomb, bursts the cloud, dispels the gloom, reveals the resurrection of the last day, places before us the last assize, declares the punishment of sin in hell, and promises eternal life and joy to saints in heaven.

*It is a revelation for man.* "It is for us and our children for ever." Things revealed are addressed to man as a rational intelligent, voluntary, and responsible being. They are addressed to man in his probationary state, that he may have the full benefit of divine teaching ; that he may grow wiser and better ; higher in intellect, purer in morals, nearer to God and heaven. The book is ours ; it is ours by royal gift and kingly favour. It is ours by possession, ours to read, to examine, and to obey. It is the common right of every living soul. The will of God is a Bible for every man. To man as man, without respect to class, age, or character, is this word of eternal life given. No man has any right to monopolise or keep it back. No body of men has any right to place an embargo on the word of God. We may trample underfoot every decree of councils that would rob us of the Bible ; reject every man that would substitute the teachings of the church, or the traditions of men, for the word of the living God ; set at nought the hordes of benighted and bigoted

priests that would prevent the free circulation of the holy book. We must reject all the vain cavilings of infidelity, and "hold fast the form of sound words."

*The truths of revelation are to be transmitted to posterity.*

Things revealed belong unto us and unto our children. This is the law: "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." This is the teaching of the prophet: "Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation." We entered life, and when reason dawned the book was placed in our hands, which we have read for ourselves. God has given to us sons and daughters, and we must give to them the word of life. Our children must read it, and pass it on to the next generation. Thus truth is to go down to the latest time, enlightening the mind, refining the soul, enkindling the love, enflaming the zeal, and guiding the life.

*The possession of the word of God is to be followed by personal practical results.* "Things revealed belong to us, that we may do all the words of this law." Obedience to the law of God is not in the transmission of truth only; but in the submission of the will and the obedience of the life to its teachings. "Be ye doers of the word," says James, "and not a hearer only." The Bible must be read, not from vain curiosity, not for purposes of cavil and criticism, not to stock the memory with precious truth, but to rule the whole life. The Bible is a light, and we must follow it. It is a map, and we must consult it. It is a mine, and we must seek for the hidden treasure. It is an authority, and we must submit to its dogmatic teaching. It tells us of God, that we may worship Him. It tells us of Christ, that we may receive him. It tells us of the Holy Ghost, that we may yield ourselves to His teaching and regenerating power. It tells us of human depravity, that we may seek the remedy. It tells us of salvation, that we may accept the free gift. It tells us of the danger of sin, that we may escape it. It tells us of holiness, that we may follow after it. It tells us of danger, that we may be watchful. It tells us of prayer, that we may approach God and make known our wants. It tells us of mercies received, that we may give

thanks. It tells us the duties of daily life, that we may perform them. It tells us of death, that we may prepare for it. It tells us of the resurrection, that we may be ready for the general rising. It tells us of judgment, that we may be prepared for the final audit. It tells us of hell, that we may escape it. It tells us of heaven, that we may seek the meetness for it. We must not do part, but all the words of this law. We must read the book daily, read before we run, and run when we have read. We must take with us daily the light for dark days, the counsellor for all seasons of difficulty. We must take with us the balm for our wounds and the cordial for our fears. In our lives we must bring forth the fruits of righteousness to the glory of God.

*Obedience to God is the way of safety and the path of pleasure.* "In keeping his commandments there is great reward." There is pain and penalty annexed to the violation of God's law. "Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed." Our responsibility is in proportion to our light and our knowledge. The possession of Bible truth may be to us our greatest bane or our greatest blessing. In the last great day when the dead shall arise, and millions of men shall stand before the great white throne, the book of God shall be opened, and men shall be judged according to the things written therein. It will invest the transactions of the last assize with peculiar interest and importance, when men from Bible lands shall hear their sentence and receive their doom. On that day disobedience shall bear a heavier curse, and fidelity to truth shall receive a richer reward.

Be grateful for the precious gift, and give to God a daily song of thanksgiving. Though much is dark and hidden and mysterious, there is much that is light and clear and disclosed. What is revealed is to us of more importance than secret things. Let the Bible, and the Bible only, be our guide through this dark world to immortality.

"Lord, grant us all aright to learn  
The wisdom it imparts,  
And to its heavenly teaching turn  
With simple childlike hearts."

## Echoes of the Bible.

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### III.

#### MOSES AND THE PROPHETS; OR, THE SUFFICIENCY OF DIVINE REVELATION.

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"Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."—LUKE.xvi. 29—31.

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Christ has been pleased to draw aside the veil and give to faith a glimpse of two worlds. There is presented to the eye of the observer a glorious heaven and a dreadful hell. These worlds are peopled by men from earth, who lived as we now live; thought, toiled, enjoyed, and sorrowed as we do now. They finished their course and went to their reward, or punishment. Their lot is fixed by character; what they were here, they are now, and for ever. "The unjust, unjust still; the righteous, righteous still." The departed have lingering thoughts and desires respecting those they have left behind. The glorified in heaven may have holy and loving desires for the salvation of the dear ones left behind. The

lost have anxiety for the safety of ungodly companions; and plead on their behalf. "I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." Let Lazarus be sent to them with some special message. Here is the tie of kindred. The feeling of a heart that now experiences the bitterness of a sinful life. Here is the dread of meeting old companions in vice; and the bitter upbraidings of a group of lost ones.

This prayer was addressed to a saint, to one who was great in the national church, of supposed sympathy and ability to help. Prayer to a saint is of no avail. "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." "They have spiritual guides, teachers of religion, and life lessons written for instruction. All that is essential for knowledge and salvation is there recorded; let them hear the authorised teachers in the book." The pleading of Dives was in error, and his persistence was in error. "Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead they will repent." "One special messenger, one special message, and moral results will follow—change of heart and the amendment of a bad life." The error of the last one is corrected: "And he said, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." To the rich man in hell it was a lesson taught when too late. To us it may be a lesson in time, a lesson for our profit, a lesson for our safety. It may lead us from hell, and guide us to heaven. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

*We have authorised teachers of religion—Moses and the prophets.* Moses was the illustrious Jewish legislator. He was raised up by God, and instructed by God. God revealed

His will to Moses, and he became the teacher and guide of the people. God raised up a succession of prophets—from Enoch, the seventh from Adam, to Malachi the last in the Jewish church. This order of men included a variety of character, mission, and work. Each man filled his place, each man performed his work. They laid open the scenes of the future; they were the true ministers of the promised Christ. They were the patriots of their country, the teachers and upholders of religion in corrupt times. These holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. These men wrote down their thoughts in prophecy, in doctrines, in precepts, and in promises. What they said is written in the book, the book we hold in our hands, the book we can read for ourselves, the oldest book, and the best book. This book is a revelation of the mind of God. It reveals to us what was beyond the discovery of unaided reason; and tells us things essential to be known and done. The prophets wrote, but God inspired the prophets; they held the pen, but God guided the hand; they put down the letters, but God gave the thoughts: "All scripture is given by inspiration." We have a copy of the Divine will—the mind of God—in print. In the Old Testament we have the pentateuch, or five books of Moses. These are placed at the head of the Jewish scripture, and contain the laws and doctrines of the Jewish sect. There are twelve historical books from Joshua to Esther. These contain the records of God's dealings with His people; on every page we see God in the history. There are five poetical books, or the songs and hymns of the church. There are sixteen prophetic books; these contain words of divine instruction, and declaration of the future extending to the close of time.

The first testament has been supplemented by the New. What was deficient has been supplied. God has spoken to us in these last days by His Son. Christ spake as never man spake. He instructed His disciples to teach men, and they went forth everywhere preaching the word. In addition to Moses and the prophets, we have in these last days the teaching of Christ and His apostles. In the New Testament we have four gospels, or the biography of the Great Teacher, and the lessons He taught. We have one history of the Holy Ghost, in the triumphs of the gospel, and the rise and progress of the church. We have twenty one letters, addressed to individuals and to churches, and containing instruction in our holy religion. One grand revelation of things past, things present, and things to come closes the inspired book. We have one book, not many. There are many parts in two Testaments. The many parts were written by various men and at sundry times, but all were guided by the self-same Spirit. This book is all-sufficient in matters of religion, the literature of ancient times, the full revelation of doctrines to be believed, the laws from heaven for life on earth, the volume of promise for every state of mind and for every circumstance of life, the infallible guide of man through life to immortality.

*There is personal duty in relation to the revealed will of God.* "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." The teachers of religion take high and authoritative positions. They speak in the name of the Lord, and say, "Hear ye the word of the Lord." We must not close the ear, nor turn a disdainful glance. We must examine their credentials and receive their message. The book they have written must not be sealed: it ~~must~~ not be shelved: it must not be kept back by priesthood nor by church. It is a book

for universal circulation, and the teaching is for all mankind. We have no command to listen to a fallible pope, to an arrogant priesthood, nor to a corrupt church. We are not to hear the decrees of councils, nor the dogmas of synods and conferences. Neither are we to hear parliaments nor kings. No human authority can legally step in between the soul and God. The Divine command is, "hear Moses and the prophets." The voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, hear him." Hear Jesus, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, James, Paul, and Jude. "Search the scriptures." This, read in the imperative, enjoins a personal daily duty, man's obligation to read, in the spirit of obedience, the mind and will of God. This passage read in the present indicative, describes an established usage sanctioned by God. The first reading conveys a law of life; the second reading a daily Christian privilege. The reading of the written word, and the comparison of religious teaching with the word, is the subject of Divine commendation. The Bereans are eulogised beyond the Thessalonians "in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so." When the Scriptures are read, we must hear. They are the voice of God to the intellect, the heart, and the life. We, too, must read them for ourselves; study their contents; treasure the holy teaching in memory; and practice them in our life.

Hear them, for they are the only authorised teachers of religion, but not pope, prelate, nor priest. The question is not what says the fathers of the church, but what says the inspired founders of religion? What says Moses and the prophets? What says Christ and His apostles? Hear them, for their teaching is plain and all-sufficient. There may be dark sayings in

their writings, mysteries we cannot unravel, depths we cannot fathom, and heights we cannot climb. These are the Divine marks of the book, the evidence of a superior mind in the revelation of truth. In all fundamental truth, in things essential to salvation, there is such plainness, that he who runs may read. Sufficient, for they reveal the true God, the one Saviour, the teaching, converting, and comforting Spirit. They tell of the one atonement for sin ; of the one way of salvation and eternal life. Hear them, for their word is the only standard of appeal, the only rule of Christian daily life. The word of God is to guide our thoughts, rule our conscience, control our affections, order our steps. Its guidance is to be sought in every movement of life. Our doubts are to be cleared by its light, and our difficulties solved by its decisions. In all things it is to be absolute and supreme. Hear them, for no other revelation will be given. The inspired teachers have passed away, and they have no successors. The book is written—the last chapter, the last letter—and God's seal is placed upon it. No human voice must be heard, no human hand must interfere. Not one line of human invention must be added. The law of prohibition and penalty stands upon the last page of holy writ. "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." Hear them, for departure from the teaching of the Scripture is the high road to error. Of this we have full proof, in the multiplicity of sects and the dogmas of parties. It is manifest in the apostacy of the papacy—in the weakness and delusion of Joanna Southcott—in the bungling story and lying forgeries of Joe Smith the mormon. We must not follow reason instead of revelation ; nor expediency in the place of Bible rule : neither our vain imaginations nor depraved hearts.

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

*There is an expressed opinion founded in human error.*

"Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." Here is the conviction of the necessity of moral change. The five brethren were evidently living a life of sin. They were defective, and change was essential to their eternal safety. This is true, and this is right. Christ said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out," is a Divine injunction. It is essential that we should know our sins, and weep over them, and confess them before God; each one must be forsaken, and the heart and life surrendered to the living God. Here is conviction that repentance is the work of life; that after death there is no repentance; that sorrow in eternity is sorrow too late. The error of the lost man is, that a moral change would be effected in his sinful brethren if one went unto them from the dead. A special messenger, with a special message. What was the message desired is not stated. He asks that one might go and testify to them. It might be that he desired they might know the end of a sinful life, or the pain and the penalty of a lost soul. If they had such a special messenger from the dead he would effect a change that the writings of Moses and the prophets had failed to produce. This, by the novelty of his appearance, the directness of his address, or the speciality of his teaching. This opinion was formed in error. God has but one way of salvation, namely, by one Saviour, and this Saviour is revealed in the one volume of truth. It is not true that a spectre can reveal more than is written in the book of God. It is not true that one from the

dead would so influence the heart as to effect a greater change than truth, and the Spirit in the truth, had failed to produce. Men perish, not for want of light and conviction ; but from indifference to the teaching of God, or persistence in wrong doing. Men are not to be scared from a life of sin, or frightened into religion. We have no reason to expect that God will set aside His plan of salvation, or step in untrodden paths to save a soul from death.

There are many errors on this side hell. The lost man is not alone in false doctrine and absurd desire. Men want their own will and their own way, and to be saved at last by magic or by miracle. In some extraordinary way, either by special revelation, by miraculous interposition, by some startling event of providence, or by some particular ministration, they wish to reach heaven. Man often wishes to prescribe for God, but He will never listen to a man's dictation ; never accommodate His plans to law breakers ; never lower His standard to human opinions and to human guilt. No promise was made to the rich man's hell cry. Lazarus was not sent from paradise to the place of torment with water to cool the tongue of the lost man. No messenger was despatched to his father's house, and no message to the sinful brethern at home. To every man there is given the day of probation, and the light of truth to teach. "They have Moses and the prophets ; let them hear them." "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life ; and they are they which testify of me." "And he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life : but the wrath of God abideth on him." "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

*We have the correction of human error. That no agency*

apart from the revealed will of God is sufficient to convert the soul. One from the dead could not convince of the danger of sin, the misery of the lost, and the necessity of amended life. Abraham was an infallible teacher. The glorified patriarch had through ages been instructed in the highest university, in heaven itself. He knew the mind of God, the laws of heaven, the history of the redeemed, and that not one of the millions of the saved was brought there through repentance produced by a messenger from the grave. The assertion of Abraham is founded upon fact. Christ in His day wrought miracles. He raised from the dead. We have two recorded resurrections. He raised the widow's son and restored him to his mother. He called from the grave His friend Lazarus, on whom death had feasted four days. The bodies were raised, the spirits came back, and there stood the men in complete form before friends and foes, witnesses of the Divinity of Jesus. Did the Jews repent, and believe in Jesus as the only Saviour of mankind? History tells us, they did not believe in Him, and they put Him to death. They murdered Jesus after the resurrection of the two witnesses of His Divinity. Christ in this parable might speak prophetically, pointing to His own death and resurrection. "If they hear my teaching now and do not repent, neither will they be persuaded to do so after my resurrection." The predictive declaration is true; Christ died, and rose again, and showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs. His own people did not believe in Him. They tried to silence the witnesses of His resurrection, and to crush Christianity by violent acts and cruel deaths.

You ask that you may have a special messenger from another world sent to you; not that you may be left to the record of the history of long centuries ago, that you may see a spectre

for yourself, hear his voice, and know that he comes from God with a special message to you. You must be convinced that he is sent from God. He must give you full proof of his Divine commission. This no spectre has done : this Moses and the prophets have done. They brought their credentials with them. Let us suppose God grants your desire, and sends you a special messenger from the dead. You are crossing a grave yard, and you see an upheaving of the ground ; quickly there stands before you a tenant from the tomb : it may be a departed husband, father, or brother. You know his form and his voice, but you are affrighted ; trembling seizes your frame ; you feel unfit to hear his message, and you hasten home. You ask for a visitor under circumstances more favourable. It is the solemn hour of midnight, all is still, and you are alone. You open your eyes, and there stands by your bedside a living form ; trembling again seizes you, and again you are affrighted ; you close your eyes and ears, and shriek for help and deliverance. Why ask for a teacher from the dead and refuse to listen ? You desire the visitor under circumstances more favourable for body and for mind. " Let the day shine and let my fellow-men surround me. Let me have light, and company, and self-possession, to look upon the strange form, and listen to the solemn lecture." Suppose God grants all you desire ; and you assemble on the Lord's-day morning, and form part of the large congregation, all eyes are directed to the pulpit, or the platform. Instead of the well-known form of your minister, there ascends one in his grave clothes. In solemn voice he tells you he has a special commission from God. You gaze in wonder, and the heart trembles and the nerves quiver while he speaks. Reason begins to exercise its functions, and you first ask, " Is this a

delusion ? What proof have I that he is from God ?” You look and listen to his weighty words ; a deep impression is produced, and you leave the house of God with many good resolutions to amend your life. And have not the same effects followed when men have listened to the voice of the ordinary preacher of the gospel ? The effects of the special teacher’s words are neither new nor more abiding. You go into the world, you mix in society, engage in business, flaunt in pleasure, and the tide of time wears away the once deep impressions of the mind. The effect of the lecture of the messenger from the dead, like the momentary shock produced by a sudden death, or the burial of a friend, soon passes away. No messenger from the grave can do the work of God. He has no power to effect a moral change. Reformation is the work of God. Christ is exalted to give repentance, and new life is wrought by the Holy Ghost. There is one Saviour, one way of salvation, one lamp of truth, one guide to immortality and eternal life. It is impious and ungrateful to ask more than God has given. Ask no more, but diligently improve God’s precious gift. The messenger cannot tell you more than what is written. What is it you wish to know ? Take your question to the book of God ; there is plain and ready answer to all lawful inquiry. Do you wish to be instructed respecting God—the Saviour—the Spirit—Creation—Providence—Redemption—the plan of salvation—the work of grace—the duties of piety—the Christian temper—Christian morality—Christian ordinances—Christian consolation—life—death—the resurrection of the body—the end of the world—the last judgment—final rewards and punishments ? “Search the Scriptures.” “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for

correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." This copious manual meets all the varieties of our religious life. It enlightens the dark mind : changes the moral nature : cheers the drooping heart : fills the tongue with joyous carols of thankful gladness : teaches the merchant wisdom : braces the warrior's courage : inspires our spiritual devotions : directs the course of our home life : sheds light upon our future destiny : guides us homeward to God and heaven. Here are sublime truths which aspiring reason cannot reach : here are easy truths with which the weakest capacity may converse with delight. "Here is a ford wherein a lamb may wade and an elephant may swim."

God's thoughts and God's ways are better than the thoughts and ways of man. God has sent human messengers, men to men. He has sent the familiar form and the familiar voice ; a Divine message in human speech, addressed to the ear, the intellect, the heart, and the life. We have each the power of reception, understanding, and obedience. It is for man to hear, obey, and live. God has done more ; He has instructed men to write His will. This will of God we may read in our quiet hours, and study and store in memory. We may turn to it again and again : each day growing wiser, and each day growing better. It meets all our mental moods, and satisfies all our spiritual cravings. Happy we who in all the varieties of our religious life have this Divine and copious manual at hand. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein."

## Echoes of the Bible.

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### IV.

#### DUTY IN RELATION TO TRUTH; OR, THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS.

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"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."—1 Thea. v. 21.

"Hold fast the form of sound words."—2 Tim. i. 13.

"Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast," Rev. iii. 3,

"Hold fast till I come." Rev. ii. 25.

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Man is an intellectual being. He has power of thought, understanding, judgment, memory, and will. He can think, observe, adduce facts, examine evidence, and conduct an argument.

Mind is to be employed in researches after truth. Observations are to be made, books are to be read, discourses are to be heard, conversations are to be cultivated, and reflection, the digestive power of the mind, is to be exercised. Free inquiry is man's birthright. One man is not to think for another, but each man is to think for himself. God holds every man responsible for his opinions.

There are many subjects presented for man's consideration; science—mental, moral, and physical; history—ancient and

modern, secular and sacred ; politics—conservative, liberal, and radical ; religion—its evidences, doctrines, duties, and institutions. Truth in every form demands his attention, especially the highest and best—the truth as it is in Jesus. Philosophy has done much to give us exalted ideas of the power and wisdom of God, exhibiting to us the wonders of creation from the heavenly orbs down to the meanest form of insect life. History has recorded the dealings of God with mankind in providence. His guiding hand and ruling power is seen on every page—God is in history. Politics has devised the best means for the regulation and government of the state, for the preservation of safety, the promotion of peace, and the spread of prosperity. All secular truth is in subordination to religion and the gospel. The Bible only is truth without the least mixture of error. Systems change and theories chase each other away, but the word of the Lord is truth divine, and it abideth for ever. It will charm when the beauties of nature fade ; it will give light when the sun, moon, and stars shall cease to shine.

*The Bible enjoins upon mankind minute investigation. "Prove all things." "Search the scriptures." "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God ; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Man must be a truth seeker, and all things must be submitted to a test. Philosophy, history, politics, and religion must be examined to the extent of our ability. We may not be able to find out the whole truth, but as much as in us lies we must try. We are not to receive assertion for evidence, nor fallacies for arguments, nor plausibility for truth. We are not to receive on trust declarations though made with zeal and authority. We may question the opinions of men and the decrees of councils. In all matters of religion man has the right of pri-*

your judgment. Every man must be his own theologian. We must have fixed principles, settled notions, and a personal creed. No man has any right to come between the soul and God. Take care that you are not robbed of your high privilege by cunning craftiness and assumed power. Be not blinded to your responsibility. Let not human fallacies deceive you. Be not trammled by the influence of worldly and false friendship. Sell not your individual right for trade considerations. Be on your guard against the pleas of indolence and ignorance. Be a man, exercise the right God has given you, and press your inquiries after knowledge. Strive to discriminate between light and darkness, liberty and oppression, truth and error. Religion has more to fear from ignorance than from knowledge, and there is greater danger in indifference than in free inquiry. "*Prove all things.*" In all the ordinary pursuits of life there is prudential care. Men will not dwell in a tottering house, nor will they sail in a leaky vessel. Inquiry precedes the entrance upon a business. The examination of a farm is prior to the purchase. The handwriting on a cheque is examined and identified, and a sovereign is put to the proof before either is received in payment. Wisdom suggests the trial of mankind before the formation and binding of a friendship. In the higher pursuits of literature, life, and religion, there must be still greater caution and care.

*Reason is the faculty that must be employed in the discovery and interpretation of truth.* There are facts that it cannot find out, but which it can understand when revealed. Reason is not an infallible guide: sometimes it must give place to faith. There is a manifold work for its exercise in relation to divine things. It must examine the evidences of Christianity—interpret scripture doctrines—define christian

duties—defend the faith. Unbelief must not cast aside the Bible before examination : prejudice must not condemn before a careful reading : depravity must not shut the door of the heart : worldliness must not chain the spirit to earthly things : indolence must not lie down and take its ease and plead inability. But reason must lead and faithfully perform its office. In this testing age man must test all things, weigh arguments, sift evidence, and seek a knowledge of all truth. The honest inquirer may ask any urgent question respecting God and His word. What is God ? Where is God ? What has God done ? Have we a revelation of His will ? How came the scriptures ? Is the Bible true ? What evidence have we that it has God for its author ? Was it written by the men whose names it bears ? Has it been transmitted to us through ages ? Have we now a faithful copy of the mind of God ? For answers to these and kindred inquiries we must study nature ; for creation reveals the existence and personality of God. Science must be explored, for it bears testimony to His power, wisdom, and benevolence. History must be read as the record of God's dealings with mankind, and as the chronicle of Divine goodness, justice, and truth. Prophecy must be examined in the light of history, and in comparison with passing events, and we shall learn that God inspired men to read and write events that were to transpire from age to age to the end of time. Miracles must be scrutinized, for in them we see the power of God reversing the established order of nature and supplying the evidence of a divine mission. *"For no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."* Jesus said, *"If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not : but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works."* We must test what God has caused to be written

by investigation, submission, and experience. "*And if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.*" "Prove me," says God. Fulfil the expressed conditions of blessing and learn the results. Test the doctrines, precepts, and promises of God by reason, obedience, and trust. Seek the forgiveness that is by faith, and the peace that flows from pardon. Give, and reap the harvest of a liberal soul. Work, and receive the wages of the diligent. By devotion prove the power of prayer, and learn from a consecrated life the blessedness of those who serve the Lord.

*Reason must be employed in judging of the truths of religion.*

God's revelation comes to us with high authority and demands our consideration. We are not to receive that as true which is contrary to the dictates of right reason. We must carefully examine the evidences of revelation and be satisfied of their truth, and impartially investigate the doctrines the Bible sets forth. "*Search the Scriptures.*" Dig deeply into the sacred mine of truth and find the precious ore. Shake and sift and narrowly search until the true meaning is understood and the force of truth is felt. Compare chapter with chapter, and verse with verse, until you are wise in things written and wise unto salvation. What at first appears difficult may be made clear by calm investigation and honest criticism.

*The Scriptures must be the rule of faith and practice.* To their teaching all our appeals must be made, and to their decisions we must bow. We are to value talent, respect learning, listen to instruction, read books, examine creeds, but all must be tested and decided by the authority of the word of God. Sentiments, motives, resolutions, habits, and all the changes

of life are to be guided and determined by the book divine. There are many urgent questions that must be determined by the oracles of God. What is truth? What doctrines are to be believed? Is Jesus the Son of God? Did He die as the propitiation for sin? Did He taste death for every man? May all men be saved? Is salvation by faith, or by faith and works conjointly? Is the soul regenerated by baptism? What is the work of the Holy Spirit? What is a christian? Who are the sons of God, and what are the privileges of adoption? What is a church? Which is the true church? Is the union of church and state scriptural and in harmony with the word of God? What are the duties of church members? By what means can they most effectually extend the kingdom of Christ? Can a Christian fall from grace? Can a backslider be again restored and find forgiveness and royal favor? What things are just, consistent, and binding? What are the relative duties of life? What are the duties of subjects and citizens? What are the penalties of sin? What is the reward of holiness? To know these things we must "*Search the Scriptures.*"

*There are many teachers of religion.* The pope, the prelate, and the parson: men in official robes, with high sounding titles; and men simple and unadorned, taking their stand as men among men. There are fathers and founders of sects, and leaders of public opinion. These we must also prove. "*Try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*" There are many false and pernicious teachers of religion, whom we must strive to detect and avoid. All human instruction must be tested by the word of God. Like the noble Bereans, we must first hear and then compare. "*They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so.*" We may lawfully question the sayings and the doings of men, from the pope to a primitive brother. Is the pope Christ's viceroy upon earth? Is the monarch of a nation the legitimate head of the church? Are diocesan

bishops of divine appointment? May a layman preach the glorious gospel? Can a priest absolve a sinner? Can a bishop impart the Holy Ghost? Can a minister of Jesus Christ commit to the dust a sinner "in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection to life eternal?" "*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*"

From the one founder of religion there have arisen many followers, and from the one system, of which Christ is head, there have sprung many denominations. Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Independent, Baptist, and Wesleyan, with many minor sects. The doctrines and discipline of each stand in contrast and in contradiction. All cannot be right, and all cannot be true. These must be examined in the light of scripture. Not by acts of parliament, not by decrees of councils, not by resolutions of assemblies, not by traditions, not by the fathers, not by the dogmas of any man or number of men, but *by the word that liveth and abideth for ever.* "*Prove all things;*" prove the sects, test the parties. If the episcopal church be scripturally right then abide in it; if it be not, then come out of it. Is nonconformity in accordance with the will of God? If so never give it up. But if not so abandon it for ever. Scripture, and reason, and conscience must decide; not association, not interest, not expediency. Your great grandfather's connection with a sect is no proof of its divinity and no reason for your continuance therein. The association of wealth with rank and title is no evidence of its spirituality, and no mark of divine favour. We must find out the true-born children of God and abide with them. All must gather round the one centre, and acknowledge the one *Head, Jesus Christ.*

*There are many creeds and confessions of faith.* Systems of theology drawn up by human heads, written by human hands, and adopted by human parties. These we must also prove. What is in harmony with the gospel in any confession of faith we must receive, and what is opposed to divine teach-

ing we must reject. To the law and to the testimony we must appeal. The word of the living God must be our guide.

There are more urgent personal questions which we must strive to settle, such that relate to our present and future welfare. What am I ? Where am I ? Why am I here ? Whither am I going ? Is my soul safe ? Am I doing the will of God ? Am I serving my generation ? Will death be to me eternal gain ? "*Prove all things.*" Prove your own self. Make sure of heaven. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

*The word of God reveals to mankind a form of sound words.* There are many creeds and confessions of faith, and many systems of theology spread over the religious world. Respecting these there have been many long and angry controversies, numberless words of strife, useless debates, fierce persecutions, and needless volumes. The words of men have been substituted for the words of God. But we must draw only from the divine records, and arrange our opinions according to their teaching.

The word of God reveals the doctrines which we are to believe, the duties we are to perform, and the institutions we are to observe. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament constitute the only authentic revelation of the mind of God and the only perfect rule of faith, and none but they have supreme authority to regulate the conscience and govern the life.

They set before us the one glorious Jehovah, the eternal, almighty, ever-present, and unchangeable Lord. They reveal the spirituality of His essence, the purity of His nature, the wisdom of His plans, and the justice and benevolence of His administrations. It is clearly asserted of God that He acts according to the counsel of His own will ; that

all things were created by Him, from the first atom to the highest angel ; that He governs all things and all beings by laws of His own enacting ; that He overrules all events, superintends all interest, brings to pass all things absolute and contingent. No human power can change His purpose or resist His will.

God created man in His own image, a spiritual, sinless, intelligent, free agent, with power to stand, with liberty to fall. Man abused his freedom, sinned against his Maker's will, and became a depraved intelligence, and involved his posterity in the consequences of his fall. Mankind are born in sin and go astray from their birth. All are exposed to the penalty of a broken law. And they are finally punished, not for Adam's sin but for their individual transgression.

God has not left mankind without remedial measures. He has placed fallen man in the position of possible salvation. Wisdom devised and love prompted the plan of human redemption, showing how God could be just and yet the Saviour of a lost world.

In the fulness of time God sent His Son and fulfilled both promise and prediction. He became incarnate, was born of the virgin Mary. He walked the earth in a complex nature, having in Himself the union of the human and divine. He was the manifestation of God, the evidence of Divine good will. He was the greatest teacher, and instructed mankind in the truth of His religion. He wrought miracles in attestation of His mission. He died an ignominious death, not as a martyr in a noble cause, but as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. He voluntarily poured out His soul an offering for sin. He became the great High Priest of our profession. He arose from the dead as a conqueror, received meditorial power, and gave commission to preach the gospel to every creature. He ascended into heaven and is now at the right hand of God as a pleading priest and a ruling king, and He must reign until all His enemies are beneath His feet. He will conquer the world, raise the dead, and

come to judgment, when He will fix the destiny of all mankind.

There is a Divine Spirit from the Father and the Son—God the Holy Ghost. He is present to fill the place of the absent Jesus, and to accomplish the intentions of God in the mission of His Son. He is to convince the world of sin, to regenerate the heart, to comfort the sorrowful, and guide the enquirer into all truth.

The glad tidings of salvation are to be preached to every creature, and every man has the power of receiving or rejecting the truth. God holds man responsible for the right exercise of his freedom. All who trust in a personal Christ are saved, and all who believe Him not are condemned. Man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law. By the power of the Holy Ghost the heart of the believer is regenerated, he is received as a child of God. The Spirit of God attests the facts of his pardon and adoption. He enters upon a high, holy, devotional, and blessed life, and is to bear fruit to the glory of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Fidelity to the Sovereign Lord is demanded, and grace to do His will is daily imparted. The faithful will be rewarded with glory and immortality. The disobedient make shipwreck of faith, they fall foully and finally, and become castaways.

The Sovereign Lord has predestined that whosoever believeth and is faithful unto death shall be saved, and whosoever believeth not and worketh not righteousness shall be condemned. All believers are the elect of God. They constitute the church of the living God. They are initiated into the profession of the Christian faith by baptism, and are made eligible to share the privileges of communion with each other and the Lord. The church is the living and abiding representative of Christ on earth to manifest His glory. Ministers and deacons are His appointed officers, members are His agents to sustain His cause, to help each other, and by life and ministry to convert the world to Christ.

Men in complete form and in varied relationship are in a state of probation. Now is the time of trial, when our present

character determines our future destiny. Death ends our probation, for the body descends to the grave to wait the general resurrection, while the soul enters an intermediate state. Finally the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and every man shall be judged according to his works; the wicked shall receive a final and just punishment, and the righteous shall go into life eternal.

We must have settled views in religion, fixed principles, and an unchangeable life. We must not be moved by every new doctrine, nor must we adopt every new creed. To every point of the religious compass we must not turn. You may change your opinions with new light and with new convictions; but never give up one thing until you are convinced that you have found a better. Buy the truth at any price, by diligence, by study, by prayer; but sell it not. For present gratification sell it not; for sensual pleasures sell it not; for worldly advantage sell it not; for novel speculations sell it not: "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith." "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." Error, superstition, bigotry, and fanaticism must not repress truth. Popular opinions must not decide your religious belief. Ridicule and a martyr's death must not deter the avowal of your honest convictions. Truth must not be cast aside. "*Hold fast that which is good.*" The Bible is good, and religion is good, hold them fast. Never give up that which makes you wiser and better, guides your thoughts, forms your character, fits you for usefulness, inspires devotion, sustains in sorrow, leads to God, and lands the soul in heaven.

*The word of God demands allegiance and fidelity.* "Hold fast that which is good." "Hold fast the form of sound words." "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast." "Hold fast till I come." Memory is the depository of truth. That which we have heard we must retain. Truth must not slip like water from a leaky vessel. Get an interest in truth, and an understanding of it, and truth

will live in loving memory. "Hold fast." Seize the truth, grasp it, retain it, never give it up. Hold it fast, for it is more valuable than gold, and more precious than life. *Hold it fast with the assent of the judgment.* Our grasp of truth must be intelligent, the result of careful examination and honest conviction. *We must hold it with the ardour of affection.* Love must centre in it and entwine around it. Love it for its sake and for its influence. Head and heart must be engaged. We must have sun-warmth as well as sun-light. *Hold it fast with the calmness of submission.* As a child, receive its teachings; as a patient, take its medicine; as a subject, obey its laws. Don't be wise above what is written, but let truth guide you. *Hold it fast with prayerful perseverance.* Never exchange it for the uncertainty of infidelity. Never barter it away for worldly advantage. Never substitute for it the inventions of men. Never yield it up under the influence of temptation nor the terrors of persecution. Ask God for daily help to keep His commandments.

*There are difficulties in holding fast the form of sound words.* There are the reasonings of a false philosophy—the intolerance of a bigoted priesthood—the dogmatism of contending sects—the depravity of the human heart—the temptations of a wicked world—the opposition of a malignant spirit. It is hard work to hold a steady and unwavering possession of that which is good.

*There are many motives to fidelity.* Loyalty to Christ and His truth will satisfy the mind, promote our reputation, extend our usefulness, secure our peace, and ensure a final reward. God will read our name from the register of the faithful, and we shall receive glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life. "But unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil."

**HOLD FAST THE TRUTH UNTIL CHRIST HIMSELF SHALL COME.**

## Echoes of the Bible.

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### V.

#### GOD ; OR, THE FIRST PERSON IN THE TRINITY.

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#### G O D.

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The being of a God is the foundation of religion. If there be no God there is no great intelligent first cause of all things, no Almighty ruler of the universe, and no proper object of religious worship. "*For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*"

*To know God is the primary study of man.* "And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father," was the last command of king David. Know God in the reality of His existence, in the majesty of His person, in the wonders of His condescension, and in the glory of His works. The

vast and varied fields where He has inscribed His name must be explored ; the government of which He is head must be reviewed ; the system of truth of which He is the great subject must be daily read. Time must be devoted to the divine study. The morning of life must begin with inquiry after God ; life's day must be employed in intelligent researches to find Him ; and the eventide must be engaged in holy contemplation of His character and the enjoyment of His acquaintance. In eternity our study of the infinite and eternal God will be continued, and our knowledge of Him perfected. The knowledge of the Supreme must be more than theoretical. Our acquaintance must be experimental, and our lives be in subjection to His will. To know God is our highest attainment, and to live and die in ignorance of Him is our lowest degradation. We must pursue our studies with reverential caution ; indulge in no vain curiosity ; embark in no idle speculation. With the light of truth, the strength of reason, and the spirit of a little child, we must " Follow on to know the Lord."

*There is in the soul a deep and earnest longing after God.* Where shall I find Him ? is the cry of the soul. As the infant cries for the parent, prompted by the instincts of its nature, so cries the heart for a Divine Father. Man is anxious to find a being superior to himself, and his heart gropes its way in search of God. Man is God's child, and only God can satisfy his desires. He is a religious animal and will worship. To find a being to whom he can go in trouble and in joy is the object of his search. In Athens, the world's intellectual capital, there were temples and altars that were dedicated to multiplied divinities. The whole city was given to idolatry. The spirit

of Paul was moved when he witnessed their excessive devotion. They had temples dedicated to every known God, and one altar to the "UNKNOWN." The Athenians had cravings that no idol could satisfy, and mysteries that no intellect could solve. In vain was the cry, "Reveal thyself, thou hidden one, to thy helpless lost children." Sad are the confessions of heathendom—"There must be a first cause, a ruling power, and an object of worship, but who is he? where is he? what homage must we give him?" To these questions the heathen can give no answer. The God that was ignorantly worshipped by Athenians was declared to them by Paul the apostle and the preacher. "God that made the world and all things therein." "He dwelleth not in temples made with hands." "For in Him we live and move and have our being." True piety draws and directs the soul to God. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God." "My soul followeth hard after Thee." "My soul shall be joyful in the Lord." "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord." "My soul wait thou only upon God." "Bless the Lord, O my soul." These are the expressions of true piety, and the gladsome songs of loving and grateful hearts. The soul without God is like an orphan. No material wealth nor worldly grandeur can satisfy the soul's craving. These only mock the wants and woes of mankind. Something higher and better must be sought. Only in God is true enjoyment found. "All my springs are in Thee." "Return unto thy rest, O my soul."

*The first article in the christian creed is substantially the same.* The Hebrew confession of faith is clearly expressed—"The Lord our God is one Lord." The christian

confession is equally clear—"One Lord, one God, and Father of all, who is above all." "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," is the declaration of each individual christian. It is belief in one God in opposition to Atheism, or the denial of the Divine existence. It is belief in one God in opposition to pantheism, or the denial of the Divine personality. It is belief in God in opposition to polytheism, or the existence of many gods. Of the reality of faith in God we have clear and conclusive evidence. Faith in His being and in His sovereign right rules the conscience, controls the affections, and regulates the life. There are a thousand acts of homage paid to God in the secrecy of holy thought and in the expressions of devout desire. To God prayer is addressed, and to Him praise is given. The soul looks up to Him in time of weakness, danger, and sorrow. In the name of the Lord Christians congregate to reverence His person and keep His sabbaths. For the glory of the Lord Christians live and labour. Conscious guilt fears His detection and dreads His wrath.

*The faith of the Christian is intelligent and firmly founded.*

It is not a blind assent to human teaching, but the result of revelation, discovery, and conviction. The Christian's faith rests not upon a foundation of sand that may be swept away by doubt, fear, or fallacy, but is built on the Rock of Ages. The idea of the being of God is not innate. It is not alone the result of observation and deduction. God was pleased to create man in His own image, a sinless and intelligent being, and to give him powers of understanding, memory, and will, and reveal Himself to His offspring. The knowledge of

God was to be transmitted to posterity to the latest generations by teaching, tradition, and a written word. The Bible is the biography of God and the infalible instructor of man. A man without Bible teaching cannot find out God. Natural theology aids man in the study of God. It does not supersede the teachings of revealed religion, but it is the handmaid or twin sister, making known to us the being and benevolence of the true God. Much may be known of the invisible God by observation and deduction. To open the eye is to admit light, to study is conviction; to deliberate is demonstration. By self-effort and persistent study, man may obtain enlarged views of the one Supreme. It is possible to remove far from God, and to lose all knowledge of His existence and superintending care. There are whole tribes of men who have no knowledge of God. Sin has darkened the mind, estranged the heart, and degenerated the character. Millions of men are without God in the world.

God has revealed Himself to mankind in His written word, and God only can be known as He is pleased to reveal Himself. He has given us a clear and full revelation of Himself. Though we cannot see Him, or press into His presence and obtain distinct views of His personality and glory, yet we know enough for the purposes of faith, love, and obedience. The Bible opens with a concise but sublime announcement of His name. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." No arguments are employed to prove His personality and Divinity. His existence is assumed and His wondrous work declared. "I AM THAT I AM," was the answer to the inquiry of Moses. From the declaration of God we learn that He exists, and that He exists independently; that He is the only indepen-

dent being in the whole range of beings ; that His existence is absolute, eternal, and immortal ; that He is without origination, without change, and without decay. God still more fully revealed Himself in answer to the prayer of Moses—" I beseech Thee shew me Thy glory." He adapted the revelation of Himself to the weakness of His servant by placing him in the cleft of the rock and covering him with His hand. " And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth ; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty ; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation." Here the perfections of God are revealed in harmonious manifestation.

*There is only one God to the exclusion of all others.* " Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." " There is one God, and there is none other but He." " There is one God and Father of us all." There are personal distinctions in the unity of the Godhead, yet the threefold personality constitute but one substance and one indivisible God. The perfections inherent in the Deity exclude the idea of more than one God. Two or more infinite and eternal beings is a contradiction in terms. The unity of design apparent in all the works of creation—the harmony of the universe—the regularity of operation from age to age confirm the truth that all things had a common origin, and are still under the control of one regulating mind and governing power. Depravity

has endeavoured to blot out the existence of God. "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." A corrupt ingenuity has multiplied divinities. "The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths. They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them." They have no voice to speak in words of wise counsel and affectionate consolation. Eyes they have not to see man's trouble or his joy. "Thou God seest me" is a comfort to the heart and a stimulus to the life. The gods of the heathen hear not the cries of distress and send no answer to prayer. They have no power of communicating life, for in them is no breath. They that worship them are like unto them. They have mouths, but they cannot speak the praise of God. Eyes they have, but see not the truth as it is in Jesus. Ears they have, but they listen not to the everlasting gospel. They have no real life, and they live not for God, for Christ, and eternity. We who know the Lord must lift up the heart in cheerful thankfulness; expressions of gratitude should be upon our lips. "Bless the Lord, O house of Israel: bless the Lord, O house of Aaron. Ye that fear the Lord, bless the Lord."

*God is invisible.* "No man hath seen God at any time." "The King eternal, immortal, invisible." "The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see." He is the glorious unseen. It is asserted that men in primitive times saw God, as Adam, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and Aaron.

These men saw neither the essence of God nor the personality of God. They looked upon some incarnation or emblematical representation of God. He made Himself known in various ways, by angelic forms, but these were not God. Fire was the emblem of His presence, but fire is not God. No man hath seen God, nor can see. He has not been seen on earth, He will never be seen in heaven. His glory will be visible, and He may fully reveal Himself in the person of His Son Jesus. Visibility is not essential to faith and worship. Sight is not essential to our knowledge and belief of things existing. Man has not seen, by unaided vision, the crown of his own head, but he believes in its existence. The visibility of God would necessitate form, and form would imply limit and locality. This would circumscribe God. Because He is invisible, He is everywhere present. That great Being, whom we see not, whose presence our eyes cannot detect, is ever beside us, perfectly cognisant of all that we do and all that we are. With Him we may daily walk, and to Him we may habitually speak. His presence is our joy, and His smile our heaven. Faith recognises the presence of the Invisible, and gives consolation and encouragement to the servants of God. "Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible." Let our trust be placed in the unseen witness of life, and our safety in the keeping of the invisible but Almighty helper. Sinner, remember God is near thee, the invisible witness of your evil thoughts and wicked deeds. From His eye no darkness can hide, and from His presence there is no escape. By Him are actions weighed and sins punished. Let us all live as in the presence of the INVISIBLE GOD.

*God is infinite.* "Canst thou by searching find out God?"

Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is as high as the heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader than the sea." All the investigations that have been made of God fall short of the object. There is much revealed respecting God that an infant mind can understand, and there is much that an angel's intellect cannot grasp. The finite cannot fully comprehend the infinite: the child of a few days cannot measure the Eternal. Man, contracted to a span and limited to spot, cannot witness all the doings of the Omnipresent. "There is no searching of His understanding." "His understanding is infinite." His attributes have no limit, His purity no tarnish, Himself no equal. You may advance from one platform to another until you reach the highest in creation. You may stand with the angels, but "He is God over all, blessed for ever." The Lord is greater than all gods. Moses and the children of Israel sang this song unto the Lord: "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like unto Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders." Here is a fearless challenge and a bold assertion. No idols can compare with God. He is infinitely resplendent in His attributes and perfect in His nature. All His works are wonderful: every ray of light, every drop of water, every grain of sand, every blade of grass, the flowers that bloom in the garden, and the trees bent by the wind in the forest. All that hath life, and instinct, and reason, declare the power of His arm, the wisdom of His arrangements, and the benevolence of His provisions. The way of providence, the facts of history, and the passing events declare His superintending care and regulating power. He is

a great King. He has no rival, and no equal. He is King of kings. He bestows upon His subjects royal bounty, and what He does is in a kingly way. Neither matter nor mind can influence Him. Matter cannot, for it is inert and passive. Spirits cannot, for they receive life from Him, and they only live by His permission and pleasure. He fills all space and exists through all duration. He is neither bounded by things above, nor things beneath, nor things around. No being can terminate His existence, for He only hath life in Himself. When we contemplate God's greatness and our littleness, His power and our weakness, His knowledge and our ignorance, His eternity and our brief existence, His purity and our defilement, we are constrained to exclaim, "Lord, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him?" God will in very deed dwell with men. The humble and the contrite shall enjoy His presence and divine indwelling, "For thus saith the high and lofty one, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and revive the heart of the contrite ones."

*The Bible reveals to us what God is.* Four distinct declarations affirm it. "God is a Spirit." "God is light." "God is love." "Our God is a consuming fire." The first asserts the spirituality of God: that He is not composed of parts, that He is not capable of being seen and felt, "For a spirit hath not flesh and bones." He is a rational and intelligent being, whose actions are determined by His own will. God is a Spirit, as man is a spirit, but without bodily parts. He is present in every place without displacing one particle

of matter. This cannot be true of any material substance, for two bodies cannot be present in one place at one time. There are passages that speak of the face of God, the nostrils of God, the hands of God, the feet of God, and the mouth of God. These are human forms of expression, and are adapted to our capacity and understanding. "God is a Spirit." "He dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is He worshipped with men's hands as though He needed anything." Our holiest service must be in harmony with His nature. A spiritual worship must be paid to Him; the offering of the soul and not the body, the homage of the heart and not the lips. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Light is the emblem of God. It discerns all objects and is incapable of pollution. It is also the means of imparting universal pleasure to created beings. "The Lord God is a sun." What the orb of day is to the solar system God is to the intellectual and moral world. "God is light." Not a light, but light itself. In Himself He is all light. He is the source of knowledge, wisdom, purity, and happiness. "In Him is no darkness at all." In Him is no imperfection, no error, no sin, no uneasiness. What light is to the world God is to the soul. Without His all-penetrating light the chambers of the soul are dark and cheerless. As the moon borrows its light from the sun, so must we borrow our light from God. And as the inferior planets reflect the borrowed rays, so must we reflect the light of God. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

The great intelligent Spirit is actuated by good-will to

mankind. "God is love." It is not here asserted that He is benevolent, but that He is benevolence. That He is pure uncompounded good-will. All His benevolent actions flow from His constitutional benevolence, as the rays from the sun, and as streams from the fountain. He cannot hate, He cannot decree what is not for the best interest of mankind. Though God has manifested Himself in mild majesty and mercy, He will not permit the violation of His laws with impunity, or allow the presumptuous and persistent neglect of His gospel. His justice will overtake, and His power destroy the disobedient. His wrath shall not always linger. The guilty He has punished, and there is no change in His attributes or His principles of government. He is not now the friend of sin : though judgment linger it will come, "For our God is a consuming fire."

CONTINUED.

## Echoes of the Bible.

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### VI.

#### GOD; OR, THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE DEITY.

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#### GOD.

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In our last chapter we were taught that the being of a God is the foundation of religion. To know Him is the primary study of man. There is in the soul a deep and earnest longing after God. The first article of the Christian creed is substantially the same. The faith of the Christian is intelligent and firmly founded. There is only one God to the exclusion of all others. He is invisible—Infinite—"God is a Spirit"—"God is light"—"God is love"—"Our God is a consuming fire."

*In three distinct ways the sacred writers furnish us with information on this great and important subject, the glorious*

*character of God.* They tell us the names by which He is designated, the attributes with which He is invested, and the works which are ascribed to Him.

*The names of God are of significant and weighty import.* He is the LORD JEHOVAH, the SUPREME or self-existing One. He is GOD, which by unanimous testimony denotes the "good," or the good Being. There are names revealed that denote His relationships and offices. He is our Father, King of kings, Lawgiver, and Judge. He is styled our Rock, Refuge, Fortress, Tower, and Deliverer. He is also called Husbandman and Shepherd. We need not go to philosophers and scholars to know His name; He has revealed His name to us. We can read in His word and in our own language all that He has made known of Himself to mankind. The knowledge of His name shall spread, and it shall be great among the Gentiles. "They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee." "Let them also that love Thy name be joyful in Thee." "I will bless Thy name for ever and ever." "All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord, and shall glorify Thy name."

*God is one, and His essence is one, but His attributes are many.* These are not separate, but parts of Himself. His knowledge is essence knowing, and His love is essence loving. They are parts of Himself in diversified manifestation. God stands related to time and to space; He is eternal and exists through all duration. He is omnipresent, and He fills all space. There are the natural attributes of God, as:—His eternity, immensity, omnipotence, omniscience, and immutability. There are also His moral perfections, as:—purity, love, patience, justice, and truth. The first belong to Him exclusively as an infinite.

Spirit, the second He possesses in common with mankind, but in a higher degree. The attributes of God are distinguished as incommunicable and communicable. The incommunicable attributes of God cannot be possessed by any finite creature: the created cannot possess uncreated fulness. The communicable man can receive, for man may be like his God in holiness, mercy, truth, and justice.

*The scriptures teach the eternity of God.* "The eternal God," "The everlasting God," are frequently occurring expressions in the sacred volume. "From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God." There is an eternity past and there is an eternity to come, and through both the being of God extends. There was a time when God alone existed, when not an atom floated in the immensity of space, and not a solitary being existed to hymn His praise. Something now exists; many moving worlds, and millions of intelligent creatures to contemplate His character and reflect His glory. One Being of supreme power and intelligence must have had priority of existence. The scriptures declare that the Eternal One is God. "He only hath immortality." "He inhabiteth eternity." We cannot grasp or comprehend the import of the word eternity. It bears some affinity to another incomprehensible thing—immensity. The one is space without limit, the other is duration without beginning and without end. Time is a parenthesis in eternity. Time had a beginning, it has a course, and will have an end. Time will be lost in eternity as the stream in the ocean. God inhabits eternity past, or duration without beginning. He inhabits eternity to come, or duration without end. He did not derive His existence from another, nor is He dependent upon another for His immortal life. No one gave it to

Him, and no one can take it away. He who has been from everlasting will be to everlasting. He needs no rest; He seeks no slumber; He knows no change; He is never weary. In His own Divine fulness and glory He ever lives. There is no past, present, and future with Him. It is eternal now with God. Distinctions of time are only in respect to the objects and creatures of His care. All things are seen by His penetrating eye, and known to His comprehensive mind. The purposes of His will He can accomplish, for time and death cannot frustrate His intentions, hinder His plans, or terminate His being.

The longest life of man is of short duration. "Thou carriest them away as with a flood." Like the grass man groweth up in the morning, in the evening he is cut down and withered. "We spend our years as a tale that is told." We are soon cut off and fly away. Friends and lovers are parted. The schemes of man are foiled, his work is stopped, his end, a shroud, a coffin, and a grave. "Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest Return, ye children of men." What is long with man is short with God. "For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." All God's works shall grow old and decay. The earth and the heavens, the work of Thy hands, shall fail. "They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure; yea all of them shall wax old like a garment. As a vesture shalt Thou change them; but Thou art the same and Thy years shall have no end."

*The eternal God is also immutable.* "I the Lord change not," is God's declaration respecting Himself. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. His being and His attributes remain unchangeable. His knowledge is perfect, His pur-

poses are sure, His word is faithful, and His work abideth. He will not change from anything within Himself, and He cannot be changed by anything without Himself. Every change is for the better or for the worse. A change for the better would be an accession of excellence, and a change for the worse a diminution of the same, neither of which is possible to God, "The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." We have clear evidence of the unchangeableness of God in the regularity of the seasons, in the bestowment of providential blessings, in the fulfilment of promises, and in answers to prayer. As in the beginning, so now, the former and the latter rain has fallen in obedience to His will. Seed time and harvest have never failed. The fruits of the earth have been gathered in, and the wants of man and beast have been supplied. His love faileth not, neither is He weary. The promises of pardon to the penitent, and grace to the needy have been verified. The prayer of faith has been heard and answered. The inspired predictions of His word have been accomplished and will be accomplished to the very letter. The same effects follow the same causes; the same blessings follow virtue, and the same penalties are annexed to vice. There is no change in Him with respect to character. He still loves righteousness and hates iniquity. He never changes His will, but He sometimes wills to change. He is unlike man, fickle and changeful, scarcely for a few hours in the same mental mood, adopting new theories, forming new plans, and cultivating new friendships. There are changes within us, in mind and morals. The house in which we live changes. We advance from infancy to age, and decline and die. Changes take place around us in men and

things. Mutability is inscribed on all things earthly. The immutability of God and the stability of His laws inspire us with confidence, stimulate action, reward our working and our waiting. Because the Lord changes not we may sow in certainty of the harvest. We may pray, knowing that sighs are heard and prayers are answered. Prayer comes back from God with fulness of blessing. The sorrowful workers shall reap a harvest of good. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." We may hope on and hope evermore. "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Man changes, but God never. He abides the same.

*The same God who exists through all duration fills all space.* The heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee." "Do not I fill heaven and earth saith the Lord?" No being can act where he is not present. God acts in every place, therefore He must be everywhere. Where the sun shines, the seas roar, or the rains fall, God is there. Wherever life moves, or man acts, or death ensues, God is present, for only He supports life and terminates our being. There is no escape from His presence. "If I ascend up into heaven Thou art there, if I make my bed in hell Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the utmost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me." There is no place where God is not. He is on the highest mountain and in the lowest valley; in the solitary wilderness and the wide ocean. He is in the crowded city and lonely hamlet; in the palace of the king and

the cottage of the poor. He dwells with the man of humble and contrite spirit. The heart of the pious is His palace. We may fly to regions beyond the stars and God is there, for He dwells in the highest heaven in glory with the saints. Down in the dark shades of the grave and in the prison of the lost, God is present. He watches the dust of His saints in the tomb; and punishes the transgressors of His law in hell. In every place, on every spot, in every moment of time, we are surrounded with God. Heaven and earth are His dwelling places. There are favoured spots and special localities where His presence has been more remarkably exhibited, His glory has been seen by human eyes, and His voice been heard by human ears. In the first paradise the voice of God was heard. He was seen in the burning bush at Horeb. In the tabernacle and in the temple His glory was manifested. And wherever two or three gather in His name there is He present in their midst. As the eternal God He lives through all duration, and as the omnipresent One He fills all space and is present with every living creature. Known to Him, therefore, are all things. Nothing is hidden from His sight, and nothing is concealed from His knowledge. "All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." The darkness hides not from God: "The darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." The thoughts that stir in the intellectual world are read by Him, and the emotions that move and swell the heart He understandeth. God knows man in the mystery of his nature, with all his associations, projects, and actions. He looks on when all eyes are turned aside. By one glance of His eye He sees the king on his throne and the beggar at the door. He sees the prisoner in his cell and the sick upon his bed. The labourer

at his toil and the weary taking rest are known to Him. His eye is over the lonely hamlet and the crowded city. He follows in the tract of war, and sees the vessel in the storm. He knows the sorrows of the saint, his poverty and his sickness. The joy of the bounding heart He reads. The labourer at his work, with all its hardships, and the tradesman with his losses and his gains He knows. He looks upon the Christian labourer working in His vineyard, and knows his motives, his principles, his failures, and his successes. The world may be in ignorance of him, or have no true estimate of his real, moral, social, and intellectual worth, but God knows all about him. He knows who fights His battles, spreads His truth, extends His kingdom, and promotes His glory in the world. It is cheering to the heart to know that One is near and knows our history. That knowledge purifies our motives, refines our morals, prompts to noble and generous deeds, keeps us at our post and at our work. God will never forsake His people, He will be near them in the hour of death, cheer and help them through the valley, and guide them safely home. He knows the dust of His saints resting in their quiet grave. No darkness shall hide from His view. In the last great day He will separate the pure from the vile, for He knows who are His. Sin in all its deformity, poisonous influence, and ruinous results stands before His gaze. Not one impure thought or unholy motive is concealed from Him. "Our secret sins stand in the light of His countenance." "All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." He detects the sinner in his winding path, in his secret haunts, in his sinful works and ways. No covering can hide from His sight or escape His knowledge. In life, death, judgment, and eternity sin stands before Him.

When our names shall at last be read out in the presence of men and angels we shall more fully understand and feel the force of this scripture : "O Lord Thou hast searched me and known me : Thou knowest my down sitting and my up rising, Thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me."

The piercing eye of God penetrates the profoundest depths of futurity, and He can foretell what shall take place in days and years to come. All things absolute and contingent are known to Him. His knowledge necessitates no course of action. Omniscience is not compulsion. He reads the future and knows the course of events. He revealed His mind to men and they prophesied. Time moves on and interprets His will. The comparison of the past with the present and the future plainly teach us that God is omniscient.

*There is no limit with respect to His power.* "I am the Almighty," is God's declaration respecting himself. Of the omnipotence of God the scriptures give us full proof. With God all things are possible. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." He gave existence to that which did not before exist. He gave birth to atoms, and He formed worlds. He moulded and fashioned all things according to His own will. There are objects so minute as to elude the unaided vision of man, and objects so vast they are beyond the finite power of man to grasp or to control. Suns and systems move in the immensity of space; and neither their distance nor diameter can be measured by human minds. The hills and the valleys He formed, and they bespeak the

highest and lowest thoughts of God. The wide-spread ocean, the solitary wilderness, and the fruitful field declare the power of God. He holds together innumerable atoms, and preserves through ages the worlds He made. The works of God are many and varied. "He spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. He maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south. He doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number." He also controls the elements by His power: "He bindeth up the waters in the thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them. He hath compassed the water with bounds until the day and the night come to an end." He has set bounds to the seas, for He has said, "Hitherto shall thou come and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." "He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven, to make the weight for the winds, to weigh the waters by measure, to make a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightening of the thunder." "Who hath measured the waters in the hallow of His hands, meted out heaven with a span, comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?" Light, heat, wind, water, and electricity are directed by His power. Terrible are the displays of His strength. "He removeth the mountains, and they know it not. He shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble. He commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars." By his power He gave life, and from insect form to angelic existence they derive their being from Him. Man was made in His own image, a little lower than the angels, and was created in subjection to His power. He holds in being millions of His creatures, and supplies their daily wants. All that He has

made are subject to His dominion. "For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He is governor among the nations." He regulates the actions of free beings and does not destroy their free-agency. Angels are raised by His power to do His will. "He setteth up one and putteth down another. He bringeth princes to nothing." He can preserve or He can destroy: He can bless or He can curse: He can exalt to heaven or cast down to hell: He can speed on the world in its course or stop its progress and reverse its laws. Marvellous miracles He has wrought in attestation of His power, and in proof of His divinity. All things that do not involve contradiction are within the range of His power. "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" Man is frail and his power feeble in comparison with God. There is much within the compass of individual and combined strength; men can level mountains, hollow rivers, construct railways, but cannot create atoms. They can plough, and sow, and reap, but cannot give the germ of life to the kernel. God must first give the seed that man may be a sower, a reaper, and an eater.

"The Lord God omnipotent reigneth," is the joy of the saint. The revealed power of God gives confidence to His people. "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom should I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? If God be for us who shall be against us? Our help standeth in the name of the Lord who made the heaven and the earth. What time I am afraid I will trust in Thee. Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him. Trust in the Lord Jehovah, for with Him is everlasting strength." Trust in Him at all times. "He is mighty to save." He can deliver from sin, Satan, the world, death, and the grave. By His omnipotence mankind shall be finally rescued

from their dusty bed and long quiet sleep. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible for God to raise the dead?" He who gave life can restore it. He shall bring you through; He shall bring you up; He shall bring you home. "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing."

CONTINUED.

## Echoes of the Bible.

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### VII.

#### GOD ; OR, MANIFOLD -WISDOM.

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#### G O D.

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Wisdom is the right use of knowledge, or the use of the best means to accomplish the best ends. It is the act or the power of judging rightly. Knowledge may exist without wisdom, but wisdom cannot exist without knowledge. Intellectual men are not always wise. There are many clever fools. Knowledge teaches man the nature of his physical and mental constitution ; wisdom directs the best means for the preservation of health, the occupation of the body, the cultivation of the mind, and its employment in the varied and highest pursuits of life. Knowledge teaches mankind the value of money ; wisdom teaches how to use it for the multiplied purposes of commerce, philanthropy, and religion. Knowledge teaches mankind the existence and reality of christianity, its doctrines, duties, and responsibilities : wisdom directs its personal adoption in faith, love, and obedience. It directs them in the course of the highest studies and guides them in the highest career.

*Wisdom belongs to God.* It is written, "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever, for wisdom and might are His." Wisdom is inseparable from His being; His knowledge is infinite, and there is no possible motive to induce Him to make a wrong use of it. "He is the only wise God." He is the only wise God to the exclusion of all others. The gods of the heathen are senseless and vain. They are the creations of fancy and the constructions of human hands. "The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation, chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image that shall not be moved." "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall hold them in derision." The god of infidelity is nature; the god of the world is mammon; the god of the votary of pleasure is lust; the only wise God is Jehovah. "He is wise in heart and mighty in strength." His wisdom is infallible and infinite. We cannot, with our short plummet, sound the depths of the wisdom of God. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God: how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" As the ocean or abyss is unfathomable, so is the wisdom of the only wise God. At every step we take in the wide fields open for the excursion of intellect, and at every effort we make to understand the works and ways of God, we are constrained to exclaim "O the depth both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." "Thy judgments are a great deep." "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God." Only God knows the mind of God. "He is mighty in strength and wisdom." There is no limit to

His power—with Him all things are possible. It is not blind might. Wisdom suggests and directs His power. The works of God display His wisdom. "He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by His discretion." "O Lord how manifold are Thy works, in wisdom hast Thou made them all." The wisdom of God is displayed in the number and variety of His works. Each work shows the wisdom of God in construction, adaptation, and design, and much more in countless numbers and in endless variety. The work reveals the skill of the workman, as the watch, the engine, and the house. Science searches out the wisdom of God in the construction and design of things material, and explores the regions of the spiritual world. History records the facts discovered by philosophers and divines, and experience bears her testimony to the wisdom of the only wise God.

We can only scan the works and ways of God, and skirt the wide fields open to our contemplation. Creation, providence, and redemption invite our personal research and reward our persistent study.

*Creation shows the Creator's skill.* God's arrangements were prospective. His own glory and the good and happiness of His creatures were the objects of His wisdom. In all things we see design, and in every design the manifold wisdom of God. God resolved to create, He fixed His time, marked out His plans, and wisdom directed His course. As the impression of the seal is made upon the melted wax, so does nature bear the impress of the only wise God. The world was to be part of a vast system in a plurality of worlds. Wisdom determined its magnitude and assigned its place. The earth was formed to admit of changes, as day and night,

spring, summer, autumn, and winter, and God resolved to give to the earth a globular form. He set it in motion and it has continued its double revolution through ages. He formed the solid rocks and kindled the internal fire. Down in the deep dark recesses of the globe He placed the mineral and metallic deposits for the use of mankind in after ages. He placed the iron and the coal in close proximity for the furtherance of manufacture and commerce. Through the fissures of the earth watery streams flow and bubble up to supply the wants of man and beast. To the globe He has given a fertile and productive power to yield supplies of daily food. Vast oceans He created to connect distant continents and islands. Rivers are made to flow for the many purposes of mankind. These form the abode of endless living creatures. On the solid earth mountains rise, there are fruitful valleys and extended plains. These are objects of grandeur and of utility to mankind. Around the globe there is an atmosphere composed of parts, and so compounded as to contribute to vegetable and animal life. Light is made to stream upon our path, "the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night, He made the stars also." He generated heat to warm and to aid us in the labour of life. Evaporation He causes to go on, and forms the cloud, the rain, and the dew drop to refresh the world.

He gave birth to organic life. Vegetable productions in variety and abundance He has supplied for daily food. Trees as ornaments for the landscape and as shelters from the heat and the storm, and also for the many purposes of construction designed for the use of man. Flowers deck the world, they are objects of admiration and utility. They are symbols of God's beautiful thoughts. Higher in the scale of organic life

the fish swim in rivers and in oceans ; insects crawl the earth or dance in sunbeams, and birds mount the air, singing and making the world vocal with the praises of their Creator. Beast rove in the field and in the forest, while many are subordinated as animals of burden to the use of the higher race. The organization of a single creature is a long and profitable study, and proof of the wisdom of the one God. There is much cattle. To each living creature He has given physical life and guiding instinct. He has made them in vast numbers, and given them gradation of order, rank, and power. He has assigned each its place, and adapted it to the locality appointed. He has made them to live in tribes and herds, and to retain their individuality and order. "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, who bringeth out their host by number. He calleth them all by names." He is the "King eternal, immortal, and invisible, the only wise God."

On the highest platform of this world man is placed. Created a little lower than the angels. He is fearfully and wonderfully made. He is the last and highest manifestation of the wisdom of the only wise God. Man is made a mysterious compound of flesh and spirit. He partakes of the earthly and the heavenly elements. Out of the dust his body was formed, and God breathed into him the breath of life. Man is a world in miniature. He has a body for a house and a spirit for an occupant. Wisdom has contrived the house in which the spirit lives, and adapted it to the occupant that reigns there. Mind was to rule matter and regulate its action. The body was to connect man with the outward world. The soul was to look out, and God has given the eyes. It was to take in sound and receive instruction, and God has given the

ears. The soul was to communicate to those around, and God has given the mouth and the powers of speech. Sweet scents were to be inhaled, or noxious vapours avoided, and God has given the nose. Danger is to be avoided and pleasant sensations conveyed, and God has given the touch. The body is to be sustained in life and God has given appetite and powers of digestion, so that the food we take as a pleasure becomes part of our constitution. The life blood is propelled by the muscular action of the heart to numerous channels through every part of the system to supply the constant waste that is going on. The soul within the body has wishes and desires, and it directs and controls the material frame. There is the desire for motion, and by the volition of the mind we raise the arm, move the foot, or pass from place to place. There is the necessary labour of life and kind offices to be performed for others, and God has constructed the hand. The eye, the ear, the foot, the hand are separately and in their combination marvels of wisdom. He has adapted mankind to the physical world, and the world to man. He has produced variety and diversity in the ranks of human beings in size, stature, aspect, gait, and speech. No two persons are precisely alike. Changes go on in our material frame but the waste is provided for and supplied. Man retains his identity, and by distinguishing peculiarities we identify our friends and foes. The only wise God has given to the soul wonderful powers. It can think and reason and move with more than lightening speed. The communications from the outward world it can understand. It can examine and compare and believe, and by judgment decide. By the power of memory it retains its stores of knowledge, and without this power the past would be a blank. The will controls our actions and

shapes our course. The soul possesses emotional power ; it can love, hate, rejoice, sorrow, hope or despair. Man is made capable of moral actions and can serve God and the age and generation in which he lives.

All God's works are perfect from the beginning. Man tries experiments, makes discoveries, contrives and constructs, but all the works of man may be improved by other inventive and constructive minds. God tried no experiment, He created in wisdom and pronounced it good. It was perfect, nothing to be added to it, nothing to be taken from it. As in the beginning, so now, He is the only wise God.

*The manifold wisdom of God is displayed in providence.*

He has not forsaken the work of His own hands. Every part of His vast dominion is under His providential care. The same wisdom is displayed in the government of all things and in the numerous productions of His creative power. Wisdom is essential to rule, for the parent in the domestic circle, for the monarch at the head of the state, and much more for the glorious God who governs universal empires. The providential rule of God extends over the material world, floating atoms, and mighty planets. He in wisdom preserves the balance of nature, the centripetal and centrifugal laws are so harmonised that planets pursue their continuous course from age to age. There is no stoppage, no collision, no wearing out. Here is wisdom infinitely surpassing the regulation of the most perfect railway operations. The globe on which we live displays the wisdom of the only wise God. The great law of gravitation holds together innumerable atoms and preserves the order and stability of material things. A short suspension of this law and the world would become one mass of confusion and disorder. He appoints the boundaries of the seas and

directs the rivers in their course. He regulates the seasons and appoints the seed time and the harvest. He preserves and promotes the growth of vegetables and plants. The animal kingdom He rules, and adapts His wise provisions to brute appetites and instincts. He provides a continual supply of food, and keeps a succession of animated being. He suffers them to perish, yet not permitting the species to become extinct. He adapts His laws to mankind as intelligent and moral agents. The actions and designs of mankind are so overruled as not to destroy human liberty nor convert man into a necessary agent. Truth is addressed to the understanding, motives to the will, and objects to the affections. Pains and penalties are annexed to transgression ; rewards, present and future, are associated with obedience to the will of the only wise God.

God carries on His wise designs disposing all events for the general good. God created man in His own image, and placed him under rule, and gave him a law of life and a test of his obedience. Death was the threatened penalty of his disobedience. Man transgressed the laws of his righteous Sovereign, and justice hastened to execute the penalty of a broken law, mercy interposed to arrest the threatened stroke. Here is collision and conflict. Wisdom interposes and devises a plan by which the demands of the law shall be met and mercy extended to fallen transgression. Jesus, the Son of God, in the fulness of time shall take the sinner's place and bear the sinner's punishment, and through His mercy and merit, grace, pardon, and salvation shall be offered to the sinful race. Through the arrangements of the only wise God the life of the sinful pair was saved, probation was extended, and the whole posterity of Adam placed in a salvable condition. Higher and better blessings were secured by the visit of the Lord from heaven than were lost by the transgression of the first Adam.

From apparent evil the only wise God educes good.

What has been pronounced by man as a calamity, wisdom has overruled for the best of purposes. The mischievous designs of a fallen spirit to tempt and lead astray a sinless pair has redounded to the glory of God and the welfare of mankind. It gave full scope for the display of the highest characteristics of God, and led to provisions for mankind of which paradise could not boast. Down the whole long line of time God has overruled the current of events for the best, bringing light out of darkness, liberty out of bondage, and life out of death. The blood of martyrs has been the seed of the church. The foulest deeds of the devil and his angels, and the worse actions of depraved man, God has subordinated to His purposes. Christianity took its rise in stormy times ; populace, priests, and magistrates were opposed to it and sought to crush the infant church. The storms that shook it gave it solidity. The persecutions that drove out Christians from their homes were the means of extending religion, for the persecuted preached the word and many believed. From small beginnings there are great endings. The little stream that takes its rise in a distant hill flows on, and fed by tributary streams, it swells to the magnitude of a river. A small spark may kindle a large fire. One stone added to another raises the majestic building. God gives significance to the little things of life. The fall of an apple aroused the mind of Newton to the study of nature's laws. The dancing of the kettle lid led the way for the introduction and application of steam. A word may arouse the powers of the mind and end in high attainments. A look may cheer the heart and give fresh courage to a troubled mind. A sermon may convert a soul and that converted man may carry the gospel to distant lands, and plant the cross amid darkness and savage life. The grain of mustard seed is small but it may grow to a large tree, and the birds of the air may lodge in the branches. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." Fishermen are made apostles. A miner's son is raised up to

reform the church. A child born at the Bell inn, Gloucester, is called to revive religion.

The only wise God appoints the place and fixes the habitation of man. The place that God appoints is best. Whether the home be a mansion or cottage, God's allotment is the dwelling of security and the abode of peace. It is possible to miss our providential lot. We must seek to know the mind of God and do it. On the farm or in the factory, on the exchange or in the shop, at the bar or in the senate, we must be co-workers with God.

Wisdom has linked together the interests of mankind. Mutual dependence is the law of the universe. The king and the subject, the master and the servant, the rich and the poor, are alike dependent. For wise purposes He has given gradation to society. Equality is impossible. Variety ensures the fulfilment of the Creator's laws.

Labour is the appointed lot of mankind. Did the earth yield spontaneously men would revel in luxury and in sin. Labour is the safeguard of society. If a man will not work neither let him eat, is a wise law. The only wise God has ordained that man should not spend his whole life in labour. He is neither a beast of burden nor a slave. Wisdom has ordained times of rest and of recreation, time for the cultivation of mind and morals. A time and a season for every purpose God has given.

Man has been chosen by the only wise God to aid in carrying out His will. He selected in early days the Jews from the rest of mankind and gave them His laws and institutions, and they were to preserve and extend the true religion. God designed an extended church, and that the casting off of the Jew should be the calling of the Gentile. "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." Wisdom has provided that blessing shall be proportioned to human need. God adapts His gifts to creatures wants. Food for the hungry, help for the weak, guidance for the

perplexed. The grace of humility is given for the time of prosperity, patience for adversity, resignation for a dying hour. For every change of circumstances in life or in death suitable and timely supplies are given.

We now pass to the higher regions of redemption, and there we find the brightest displays of Divine wisdom. It is the distinguished peculiarity of the world's history. Intelligent beings strive to penetrate its mysteries, "which things the angels desire to look into."

The idea of redemption originated in the mind of God, the thought was far beyond the capacity of men or angels. It was the only wise God that originated a scheme commensurate with the necessities of mankind, and adapted it for the manifestation of His own glory and the good of the race. The design of the designer was gloriously manifested. In redemption the attributes of God were exhibited in harmonious manifestation. Wisdom surpassed the arrangements of creation and providence, Holiness maintained its high character in the mysteries of the death of Christ. Justice pursued its course in inflictions stricter than that which punished devils, Mercy shone in richer manifestation than when heaven was filled with angels. Righteousness and peace embraced each other. God showed Himself just and yet the justifier of them that believe in Jesus. The wisdom of God adapted the provisions of redemption to the necessities of mankind. The child of love became a lawbreaker, and God provided pardon for the guilty. Man is polluted by sin, but redemption is the grand remedial measure for his impurity. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin."

The provisions of redemption are within the reach of mankind. They are "without money and without price." The rich must accept them as a free gift, and the poor may share in the royal bounty. The conditions are simple, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." The only wise God wills that "all men should be saved and

come to a knowledge of the truth." He offers blessings to all; He violates no man's freedom; He coerces no man's will. Salvation, as a free gift, is of the Lord. The acceptance and enjoyments of the benefits of redemption is by man. The perfect system of redemption in its reception regenerates the heart, makes man a new creature, develops the fruits of holiness in the life, and fits man for a career of usefulness. Man blessed of God is made a blessing.

The wisdom of God is displayed in the employment of human agency in the propagation of the gospel. The gospel for every creature is to be spoken by human tongues. Wisdom has provided for the conversion of the world, and the arrangements of the only wise God shall be completed.

The renovated power of the soul are capacitated for vast enjoyments, and wisdom has provided to satisfy the desire of the regenerated heart. All spiritual good we have here in the daily gifts of grace, and hereafter in the higher communication of spiritual blessedness in glory. In heaven they sweetly sing, "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

The judge of all shall come, and wisdom is displayed in the appointment. The Son of God shall judge the world. He is Divine, no man can escape His eye, resist His power, or refuse submission to His decision. Divinity qualifies Him for the high office of universal judge. He is also man, and His humanity gives Him fellow-feeling, and a sympathising heart. We dread absolute Divinity, but the only wise God has ordained that Christ, as God and man, shall judge the world.

Study the works of the only wise God. Accept the provisions that wisdom has placed within your reach. Follow the guidance of One who cannot err. Sing the praises of Him who is worthy of your loftiest songs. "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

# Echoes of the Bible.

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## VIII.

### SOVEREIGN RIGHT; OR, GOD'S SPIRITUAL PROPRIETY.

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"All souls are mine."—Ezek. xviii. 4.

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There is one Sovereign Lord. He is spiritual in His essence, eternal in duration, almighty in power, and by virtue of Divinity present in every place. The Great Spirit is the originator of all things. Creation sprang into existence at His bidding; the world of matter and the world of mind. He formed the floating atoms and drew them in union; He made suns and systems, and put them all in motion. He gave existence to angels and to men, and surrounded His throne with beings formed for the contemplation of His character, and for the activity, devotion, and dignity of His service. God the Spirit is ever mindful of His Divine authority and Sovereign right: all that He has created He claims: things material He claims—"the gold and the silver are *Mine*." Animal life and brute instinct He claims—"the cattle upon a thousand hills are *Mine*." Spiritual essence, thinking power, affections, and volitions He claims—"All souls are *Mine*." The royal rights of God are absolute and exclusive; He admits no partner, He allows no rival. Man has no right in man; man has no right in himself; the Lord declares, "*All souls are Mine*."

*God has a vast propriety.* The universe is divided into

two parts, the material and the spiritual, or, the world of matter and the world of mind. Matter is in various forms and combinations. Inanimate matter is floating in small atoms and moving in ponderous worlds. Matter is associated with organic forms ; it is flying in the clouds, falling in the shower, rolling in the stream, flashing in the light, blooming in the flower. Matter is in combination with animal life and instinct, and in close union with the immaterial and immortal soul of man. The body is the house, but the soul is the occupant. The body is the casket, but the soul is the jewel. My soul, your soul, what is it ? Philosophy says the soul is something distinct from matter. My soul, your soul, is the region of thought and the seat of intelligence. It is not thought and intelligence, but that which thinks, and knows, and wishes, and desires, and loves. It is that which desires and plans and performs noble deeds. It is mind that governs matter. It is mind that moves with more than lightning speed to the ends of the earth and up to the heavens, beyond the stars, to the palace of God. Mind is wonderful in its quiet contemplations and in its lofty flights. The soul is moving on in its progressive attainments and wonderful achievements. Being immortal, it will live on through endless ages.

*The Spirit world is wide in its extent.* Millions of millions have entered life since Adam became a living soul. Each child born has a spirit within him. Millions of men now live and move ; earth is crowded with spirits wrapped in flesh. This is true of the savage and the civilized, of the sinner and the saint. There may be other planets teeming with spiritual and immortal life. From this world souls have passed away, a number almost beyond arithmetical calculation. A great

multitude from every nation are now before the throne of God, all perfect, safe, active, and happy, and for ever with the Lord. Legions of lost souls have gone to the dark prison of hell, self-excluded from God and heaven.

*There is great diversity in the world of spirits.* In all God's works there is variety and contrast. The minds of men, like their bodies, differ; there is every variety of intellect: there is the mind of the infant that is folded up and feeble, which has to be developed and strengthened by education and discipline; and there is the mind of the philosopher that has acquired giant strength and extensive knowledge; the one is just opening into life, the other is elevated and expanded by constant care and culture. The minds of men vary, one man is distinguished for the clearness of his understanding, a second for the soundness of his judgment, a third for the strength of his memory, a fourth for the brilliancy of his imagination, a fifth for the power of his invention, a sixth for the intensity of his affection: there is every variety of intellect, and every gradation, from the dwarfish and the feeble, to the gigantic and the powerful. There is every variety of mental culture, and every shade of moral character, from the depravity of a devil to the purity of an angel. Souls, in all their variety, belong to God; from the lowest order to the highest rank. God is the head of the spiritual empire and sovereign proprietor. He asserts His Divine right in this declaration—"All souls are *Mine*."

*The claim of God is founded on Divine right.* It is not assumption, but sovereign right. It is founded on our special and peculiar relationship to God. Mind originated with God; He is the Father of the spirits of all flesh. This is the record of the soul's origin, "So God created man in His own

image, in the image of God created He him." This could not refer to the material part of man, it is likeness to God, and God is a pure uncompounded Spirit. The likeness to God was in spirituality and purity. No modification of matter could bear resemblance to God, we must look further for the traces and resemblances to *Him*. We read, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." God formed first the body and then breathed the life; first built the house and then supplied the occupant. "There is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the *Almighty* giveth them understanding." The soul is an emanation from God, and it is there He takes up His abode, and pours forth His light, and breathes His influence, and exerts His power. It is spirit that constitutes the man, and likeness to God his highest honour. The Lord made thy soul, and here rests the first foundation of His Divine right and the reason of His sovereign assertion, "All souls are Mine."

*Souls are God's by providential care.* Each soul is held in being by His power. Life and immortality depend upon the Divine will. Were God to leave man one moment he would cease to be. He only who hath immortality can make man immortal. God supplies all that is essential for soul life; and all our springs of enjoyment are in Him. His favours place man under eternal obligation. He has a claim founded on infinite goodness. Love asserts, "All souls are Mine."

*God has a claim founded on redemption.* Souls fell through transgression, and became defiled. Man is a depraved intelligence. Disobedience and revolt exposed the rebel to the menaces of law and justice and liability to the penalties of eternal death. God kindly interposed to save the soul.

He devised a scheme of mercy to rescue man from sin, pain, and death. To save the soul and elevate it to glory, God sent His own Son into the world. Christ came, and lived, and preached, and died, and rose again. Christ's sinless soul took the place of man's sinful soul, and all the pains and sufferings that were due to the transgressor He endured in the agony of His heart and in His body on the cross. "He tasted death for every man." The soul is redeemed, "and the redemption of the soul is precious." A price more valuable than gold and silver has been paid to law and justice for man's ransom. The life of Jesus was surrendered for the life of man. Every soul is in the position of possible salvation. Some are saved, all may be saved by faith in Jesus. All souls are God's by redemption. "We are not our own, we are bought with a price: we must therefore glorify God in our body and in our spirit, which are His."

*The relationship of man to God involves obligations and life duties.* That which we originate is our own, that which we receive is a trust, and "Stewards must be faithful." Every favour received is a reason of obligation to the benefactor. The expressions of grateful love are reasonable and just. Duties grow out of relationships. Mutual love is the duty of the marriage union. Honour is due to the parent from the child; loyalty from the subject to the king; fidelity from the servant to the master; gratitude from the recipient of bounty to the benefactor. Consecration, activity, and submission, are due to God. "All souls are Mine," saith the Lord; therefore man is not at liberty to think as he pleases, to speak as he pleases, to act as he pleases. The house in which we live, and the occupant with all its powers of understanding, judgment, memory, will, affections, energy, and life must be

surrendered to the Lord. Mind must be employed with God and for God. It is not a bodily service that God demands, only as the body serves the volitions of the soul; it is not giving, only as the giving is the result of the mind's convictions, and the soul's love. We must with the spirit serve God. We may serve God in quiet thought, in devising plans of usefulness, in mental prayer and praise. The willing soul must move the tongue to speak for God, the hands to minister to need, and the feet to run in the paths of usefulness. Life must be a devoted service of the soul. We must seek to know the Lord's will; we must learn the Divine commands; and we must run to do the bidding of our God. In patience we must bear the ills of life, and wait His final call and His great reward.

The consecration of the soul to God is our safety and our joy. The soul in Divine keeping is safe; and the soul in sympathy with God is happy.

From this world man must pass away. "Then shall the dust return unto earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." The immortal spirit is separated from the mortal body. The door is opened and the spirit is let out. Gone to God: returned to God, to give account to God. The spirit is responsible; and it has to deal with God. It may at once pass to a first judgment, but certain it is, as soon as the soul quits the body its destiny is fixed; it may wait a final judgment and an eternal doom. Conceive the solemnity of the spirit passing into the presence of God. God will deal with each man according to his moral character and conduct. The soul has the character, not the body; the soul is the seat of sin, or the seat of holiness; the dissolution of soul and body does not alter the character;

the soul leaves the body and carries its character with it. The darkened understanding, the corrupt imagination, the perverted judgment, the rebellious will, the unholy affections, passes into eternity, where, "the filthy shall be filthy still, and the unjust shall be unjust still." The enlightened mind, the justified spirit, the regenerate soul, shall pass into a heavenly mansion, where "the holy shall be holy still," and "the righteous shall be righteous still."

Sin is the soul's ruin; "for the soul that sinneth it shall die." There is the death of the soul as well as the body. Here is the judgment and the law of God; not one shall die for another's crimes; not one shall live for another's righteousness. The soul shall receive its own doom, its own reward or punishment. There is the death of the soul as well as the death of the body. The sinning soul shall die, for the wages of sin is death. The death of the soul is not annihilation; it is not the absence of consciousness; it is existence, and consciousness, rendered the element and source of unutterable agony. It is not the absence of feeling; it is feeling a sense of God's wrath, and absolute despair. It is the corrosions of conscious guilt, the gnawing of a worm: it is the mysterious and awful punishment of those who reject the rightful reign of God over them.

Holiness is the life and safety of the soul. The sanctified spirit shall return to God. Faith, love, and obedience, shall have a large reward. The faithful soul shall stand with sinless angels, shall do the will of God, and shall eternally enjoy the presence of God in Christ. The soul shall live in heaven. It shall be holy life, happy life, active life, eternal life. In heaven there is no sin, no tempter, no toil, no fatigue; all are over, and the soul is for ever with the Lord. In the present

life, and in the life to come, in death, and after death, "All souls are Mine."

The whole economy of God is a display of love to our fallen spirits, and the whole course of God is a manifestation of mercy to bring man back to Himself. Man is met in his downward course, now the spirit strives, now the gospel is preached, now the golden sceptre may be touched, now mercy may be obtained. Now is the time of conviction, contrition, confession, and consecration. The improvement, or non-improvement of life will determine the eternity of glory, or the profundity of damnation. There is a tremendous responsibility of the soul that is thinking, feeling, purposing, speaking, and acting in reference to the judgment and eternity. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Who, then, is willing to consecrate himself unto the Lord? Mind, memory, will, affections, and life. Be wise in time; "Lay up these words in your heart and in your soul." Respect the royal rights of God: obey the commands of your Father, "My son give me thine heart." Devote life to His service, "Love the Lord your God, and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul." Submit to His rule and guidance; "In patience possess ye your souls." In dark seasons, and in days of trial, trust the living Lord for help and safe keeping. "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." Be grateful for every free gift. Be ready for the final call, for the solemn hour of dissolution, and in life's latest moment pray, "Lord Jesus receive my Spirit."

## Echoes of the Bible.

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### IX.

#### PROPHETIC TEACHING; OR, THE SOUL SUFFERINGS AND SUCCESS OF MESSIAH.

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"He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied."  
Isaiah liii. 11.

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There is a God who alone sees the end from the beginning; whose piercing eye penetrates the profoundest depths of futurity, and who can reveal to the mind of man parts of that mysterious whole which is to Him all light. God revealed His mind to holy men. He taught them what to speak and what to write. Prophecy is a Divine seal affixed to the holy book, and is a reason for our faith and for our hope. Prophecy was the means selected by infinite wisdom to introduce the Messiah, and to prepare the world for the reception of the fulness of blessing which result from His visit. The two great facts testified by the old testament prophets were "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." The book of Isaiah is full of Christ. The prophet lived seven hundred years before Christ, but he foretold the visit of Christ, the sufferings of Christ, and the glory of Christ. In prophetic words he has written the life of Christ with all the accuracy of the faithful historian. He declares that "He shall grow as a tender plant:" "He is despised and rejected of men:" "He bore our griefs:" "He was wounded for our transgression:" "He was oppressed and He was afflicted:" "He was taken from prison:" "He made His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death:" "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him:" "Thou shalt make His

soul an offering for sin : " He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Favoured as we are with the light of the new testament, we need not err in the application and interpretation of Isaiah's prophecy. The Ethiopian eunuch, sitting in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet. " He was led as a sheep to the slaughter ; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened He not His mouth. In His humiliation His judgment was taken away : and who shall declare His generation ? for His life is taken from the earth." " Of whom speaketh the prophet this ? of himself, or of some other man ? " This was the question of the inquiring Ethiopian after truth. " Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." Jesus in the divinity of His person—Jesus in the mystery of His incarnation—Jesus in the holiness of His life—Jesus in the agony of His death—Jesus in the glories of His resurrection—Jesus in the triumphs of His reign. To you we preach Jesus—Jesus in His suffering—Jesus in His success—Jesus in His joy—" He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied."

*Christ Jesus was a man.* In His nature there was the mysterious union of divinity and humanity ; of body and of soul. Humanity was in subordination to divinity. In the body of Jesus there was a soul thinking, desiring, feeling, sorrowing, and rejoicing. Jesus was " a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." This is the brief dark history of the Son of God. His life was not like the ordinary history of mankind. Man's life is an alternation of light and shade, ease and pain, joy and sorrow. The life of Jesus was a life of toll, pain, and grief. Once He rejoiced in spirit, but many were the seasons of His sorrow. In His short life He had many physical sufferings, privation, hunger, weariness, and pain. A cruel death closed His life. The sufferings of Jesus were more of a mental than of a physical character. It was the travail of His soul—agony in the deep recesses of the mind. Mental sorrow is far more hard to endure than physical pain.

The spirit of a man will bear his infirmity: "but a wounded spirit who can bear?" The sinless soul of Jesus was susceptible of suffering. The prophet declares His soul "travail," that He should experience in mind labour, weariness, vexation, sorrow, grief, trouble. Jesus read the dark hours of the future, and when He thought of the betrayal "He was troubled in spirit." When life was ebbing and His end was drawing near, He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He saw and He felt the dark approaches of the coming foe and the final conflict: "He poured out His soul unto death."

There were two memorable scenes of the Saviour's sufferings—the first Gethsemane, the second Calvary. Jesus, "as He was wont, came to the mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him. And when He was at the place, and was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, He kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." This agony of Jesus was mental. No scourge, no thorn, no nail, no spear had yet touched the body of Jesus, but He was in the greatest possible distress and anguish. He was exposed to the damp and chill of night, yet "He sweat as it were great drops of blood." It was blood; it was perspiration mixed with blood forced through the pores of the skin by anguish of the soul. This is possible, and this was actual in the suffering Redeemer. Jesus passed through successive days of trial and nights of distress. His last days were days of darkness, conflict, and trouble. The benevolent Jesus was despised and rejected of men. The innocent Jesus was unjustly condemned to be crucified. He patiently endured cruelty and wrong; He submitted to the sentence of His enemies; He carried His own cross; and on Calvary He died. "Jesus, when He

had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost."

There were two special sources of the sufferings of Jesus. There was the weight of the world's sin and the withdrawal of the Father's countenance. The sin of the world was laid upon the immaculate Son of God. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every man to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." His sufferings were on account of the world's transgression. His death was vicarious. "His soul was made an offering for sin." He died, not as the martyr died, a painful cruel death, but unburdened by another's sin and another's sorrow. The soul of Jesus took the place of our souls; His soul endured the pain and penalty due to our souls. That which would have been eternally wrung from the creature, fraction by fraction, was vicariously endured and paid by Jesus. All the righteous wrath that would have shut guilty man in prison and swept away creation, entered into the inner chamber of the man Christ Jesus. The substitutional suffering of Jesus must be of the same kind and to the same extent as that of the fallen transgressors. The results of original sin were more of a mental than a physical disaster. The mind suffered more than the body through the fall. Sin is the cause of the soul's sorrow and the soul's ruin. Therefore Jesus "travails in soul." "His soul was made an offering for sin." "He poured out His soul unto death." In that awful hour the Father's cheering and sustaining presence was withdrawn from the illustrious sufferer. He had been sustained through life by the conscious presence and approval of God. Voices had testified, "This is my beloved Son." In the minor conflicts of life He had been supported and was victorious. This was the darkest hour of His trials. Souls were perishing; the world's destiny was depending upon the conquest. Satan, in cruelty and rage was striving to defeat. The Father's presence was withdrawn. It was the lonely hour of desertion and distress. In deep anguish of heart He cried, "My God; My God; why hast Thou forsaken me?" He felt upon the

cross the desolateness of a deserted Spirit. God in whom we live, who is our support and comfort ; God whose presence has cheered the hour of the dying martyr, and conducted the saint through the dark valley, was withdrawn from the world's greatest sufferer. There is mystery in the death of Christ. He endured the pain, He drank the cup, He bowed His head, and He cried, "It is finished."

We learn many lessons from the sufferings and the death of Jesus. *First the evil of sin.* It worked man's misery and man's death. When laid upon Jesus, it pierced His heart with sorrows and nailed him to the tree. There was great love on the part of Jesus ; His love brought Him from heaven to take the sinner's place and die in the sinner's stead. "He loved us and gave Himself for us." There was great endurance. He patiently endured all the trials of life, and "was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearer He opened not His mouth." There was great triumph. His death was not a defeat, but a victory. He stooped to conquer. He triumphed gloriously, and we may, through Him, triumph too! "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied."

*The sufferings of Jesus were not in vain.* A numerous progeny were to arise. "When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed." Death and life are strangely commingled. The promulgation of life follows the soul offering in death. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." The kernel has the germ of life within itself ; but it will not fructify in the store, it must be deposited in the soil, and die ; and from it springs, first the blade and then the ear. First the death, next the life. In the death of Jesus was the life of His people.

*The once crucified Jesus now lives.* He has ascended into heaven itself, and lives and reigns as mediatorial King. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."

"The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands." The pleasure of the Lord is the salvation of millions of sinful men. The pleasure of the Lord is to people heaven with a host of happy and grateful beings. He is to share in the triumph and in the spoils of battle. He is to take the rank and honour of kings. "I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death."

*Glorious results have followed the death and rising of Jesus.* Great have been the triumphs of the Son of God in the ages past. His name has been heard; His influence has been felt; His authority has been admitted. Converts have been made to Christ and to christianity. Christ and His gospel triumphed over the impure Romans; over the licentious Corinthians; over the sensual Ephesians; over the ignorant Philippians; over the idolatrous Thessalonians. Men of all ranks have been called and elected, churches have been formed, and a common brotherhood has been enjoyed.

*The work of the Lord is now going on.* Christ is subordinating to Himself every kind of agency for the extension of His kingdom. He is employing every righteous means for the promotion of His glory in the world. Bibles are distributed, schools are established, missionaries are going out, the gospel is preached at home and abroad. Men are now enlightened by the word and converted by grace. East, west, north, and south the reign of Christ is extending. Christ is looking down with complacency upon loyal subjects and an increasing empire. History records the past and present success of Christ. Prophecy foretells a brighter and more triumphant future.

*The world is for Christ.* He has redeemed mankind, and they are His by purchase and royal right. Satan shall be overthrown; sin shall be checked; idolatry shall be uprooted; popery shall be destroyed; infidelity shall be crushed. The throne of Jesus shall be established in righteousness. The world shall be evangelized and regenerated.

Wars shall cease, peace shall prevail, and gladness shall fill every heart. "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills: and all the nations shall flow unto it. And they shall beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not rise against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." "From the rising of the sun, even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of host." "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." "Therefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." He shall in the glorious future and in the millennial age, see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.

*There is to come the resurrection of the dead in Christ.* Christians of every age, from every land, of every rank shall rise again. Patriarchs, prophets, and apostles shall be there; martyrs, missionaries, and ministers of every name shall be there. All the faithful servants of Christ Jesus from home and distant lands shall rise: not one forgotten, not one overlooked. "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." Heaven shall be peopled with the saved. "A great multitude which no man could number of all nations, kindreds, and people, and tongues." "These are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." These are the fruits of Christ's death, the trophies of His victory. Christ shall see in the vast and glorified multitude before the throne the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.

*There is satisfaction and joy in the work of Jesus.*

Holiness delights in works of mercy and doing good. Jesus, "who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." The joy before Him was not the joy of suffering, but the joy of saving souls and peopling heaven with hosts of happy men. There is the joy of anticipation and the joy of realization. In the triumphs of the past, and in the progressive advances of the future, there is delight. The conversion of a sinner is the joy of Jesus. The elevation of a soul to glory is the joy of Jesus. When the whole family of the redeemed shall meet in heaven, the joy of Jesus shall be complete. "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied."

Man may live a threefold intelligent and happy life in the contemplation of Jesus and His work. He may live in the past aided by history and memory. He may live in the present aided by observation and revelation. He may live in the future aided by prediction and cheerful hope. Our obligations to Jesus are great; He has had pleasure in us, we must have pleasure in Him. He has done much for us, we must do something for Him. Let us labour to extend His kingdom, to spread His honour, to celebrate His praise. Work done for Jesus shall have its reward. Glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life unto every man that worketh good. But upon them who are disobedient and work unrighteousness there shall come indignation and wrath. If you will not do His will and win His favour, you must have His frown. If you will not submit to His authority, you must share the lot of the banished ones. Jesus will be glorified in your salvation, or in your destruction. "Kiss the Son lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little." "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

## Echoes of the Bible.

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### X.

#### MY FATHER'S BUSINESS; OR, CHRIST'S CONSECRATION AND OURS.

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"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business." Luke ii. 49.

"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." John iv. 34.

"I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." John ix. 4.

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"Example is better than precept," is an old proverb. Noble deeds are far more convincing than eloquent words. A living model is the best pattern for our imitation. The highest character has the greatest claim upon our attention; and those who have achieved the greatest results should be our leaders.

The Bible abounds in biographies, every variety of character is chronicled, what they said and what they did, every virtue and every grace is portrayed. We have in the lives of the illustrious men a copy for the king and a rule for the subject. There is one grand life that stands distinct and pre-eminent—the life of Jesus excels all other lives; He alone was absolute perfection walking on earth. In the God-man every

glory of character was manifested. The life of Jesus was religion teaching by example. In the morning of His life He felt a holy impulse, a living power moved His heart, and at twelve years of age He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business." He began life with a noble purpose ; and felt He had a great work to do for God. The deep conviction of mind and the power of love continued with Him through life. Beyond the days of His boyhood He said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me." Near His life's close He said, "I must work the work of Him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work."

*Christ began His life-work early.* His childhood was consecrated to God and Divine work. He broke away from parental restraints in the early morning of His life. His character and His course was a mystery to His mother. The will of His Father, God, was more powerful than the mind of nearest relatives. He knew a short day was before Him, and He wisely resolved to make the best of it. He began His work in the temple at twelve years old ; He entered the company of the most distinguished men of the age and country, and heard and asked them questions. To make the best of life the morning should be improved. To accomplish the greatest amount of work we must begin early. In the life of Christ there is a lesson for little children, and for young men and maidens. You may not be able to ask and answer difficult questions, nor convey instruction to learned doctors ; but you can employ the freshness and vigour of youth in the service of God. In the sweet morning of life you may be engaged in some department of your heavenly Father's business.

*Christ's life was one of devotion to the will and work of God.* "I must be about my FATHERS'S business." "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me." These were the sayings of our Lord ; they were the principles of His life ; and were embodied in His actions. A life time commenced,

continued, and ended with God and for God. He starts life with a recognition of a Divine relationship, and He calls God "Father." He never lost sight of His Sonship and the Divine Fatherhood. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." "My Father" was heard frequently in His last discourses and His prayers at Gethsemane and Calvary. "The cup that my Father giveth me to drink, shall I not drink it?" were words upon His lips when on the threshold of the cross. Personal considerations were lost in the higher element of Sonship. After His resurrection Jesus said to Mary, "I ascend unto my Father, and to your Father." The relationship was not peculiar to Christ. He taught the disciples to say "Our Father." The child of regeneration and adoption can say, "Abba Father." Happy is the man that starts life with the conviction that he has a Father in heaven; there is power in the idea; and there is living impulse in the thought. The purpose of Christ's life was to do the will of His Father. God had good intentions respecting mankind, and Christ knowing the mind of God came to carry them out. Christ had a great work to do for God—Truth to reveal—A kingdom to establish—Foes to conquer—Souls to redeem—Heaven to people. In heaven He was worshiped as God; on earth He ministered as a servant. Part of Christ's work was special and peculiar, no man was with Him, no man could aid Him in the work, no man could imitate Him in the work. There is imitable work and man may be as his Lord. Business is the lot and occupation of men. The callings of life are various. There is the business that is not lawful—the service of Satan and sin: there is the business that is selfish—living and toiling without God for worldly and personal gain: there is the business that is Divine and for God, and every man has a mission and a work for God. In the ordinary walks of daily life we may be about our Father's business, fulfilling our divine vocation. The mechanic at his toil, labouring in the fear of

God; and the merchant and the tradesman on the exchange or in the shop, buying and selling with truthfulness and honesty. The rich and the noble in the walks of philanthropy and benevolence; and the Christian in the higher walks of holy and devoted life are about their Father's business. Our Father's business is in the church, to live in unity and prayer, seeking to evangelize the world, to support missions of mercy, and to recover the lost. Our Father's business is the supreme object of life.

*The consecration and work of Christ was personal.* "I must be about my Father's business." "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me." Christ never lost sight of His individuality; and He never lost sight of His mission. There was a work which He alone could do, and He did it. Every man may be at ease, or indolent, but "I must be about my Father's business," "I must finish the work He gave me to do." Christ taught the disciples their duty and their work. Peter, James, and John had to labour as their Lord did. All hearts and hands must be employed in the Father's business. Are you young?—then in life's morning you must begin your Father's business. Is it midday with you?—then give the strength and energy of your best days to your Father's business. Is the day far spent?—let eventide be devoted to the completion of your Father's business. In your body and in your soul you must be about your Father's business. There are thousands of willing workers, but you must work too. A great work has been done, and many have gone to rest, but upon you now depends the work of the Lord. You may be one in a crowd of workers, but you must do your part. You may be isolated and alone, "but you must be about your Father's business," I must work, must be the daily confession of the lips and the daily action of the life. "What wilt Thou have me to do" is the first question of the new convert, and the chief concern of a Christian's busy life. Where there is no

religion man will be indolent and selfish. Where there is true religion there is life, and where there is life there is action. True religion will set a man to work, and keep him at work.

*In the devoted life of Christ there was an ever present impelling power.* "I must be about my Father's business." "My meat is to do His will." There was in the mind of Christ a deep conviction of something to do, and for whom it must be done. There was a moral constraint, and a holy impulse; I Must do it, I cannot help doing my Father's business. The whole soul of Christ was absorbed in the work of God. His entire being, and whole life was a continued consecration to the service of His Father. Love was the inspiration of His life; the constraining power that moved to daily action. The service of Christ was compulsory; but it was willing and pleasant; for His delight was to do the will of His Father who sent Him. It was an active and a happy life. There is an omnipotent power in love, and where it lives and reigns in the heart, there is active and willing service. The disciple, like his master, has felt the power of living thought and burning love. In times of difficulty and trial conviction and love have decided the course of the servant to labour and to brave the storm. The threatened and prohibited disciples said, "We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard." "We ought to obey God rather than men." In the face of bonds, affliction, and death, Paul said, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus." The same conviction and all powerful love nerved the hearts of the reformers of the church and made them valiant in the service of Christ. The same power reigned in the hearts of revivalists, and men of God faced rude mobs, stood against the hosts of hell, and preached Jesus. The living minister of God fears no frowns, courts no smiles, seeks no ease, studies no pleasure, asks no pay. "I must be about

my Father's business." The same living power is felt in the soul of the new convert to Christ ; and he begins his higher life with holy love and earnest desire. He shows a willingness to take any place or part in the service of God ; he carries a tract, he speaks a kind word, he instructs a little child, he visits the afflicted, he prays, he works, he is all on fire for God. " I must be about my Father's business." The aged disciple feels the pressure of love in his old age, and in his growing infirmities, the power of grace reigns within and he finishes his life doing his Father's business. The life of the Christian is a mystery to the world, as Christ was a mystery to His mother. The world has sneered and cried " fanatic ;" but it has not checked the zealous life of the christian. Grave people have frowned upon imaginary imprudence. Prudent people have warned us of danger. Dark prophets have predicted the declension and abatement of religious zeal. The true Christian, like Jesus his pattern, exclaims, " I must be about my Father's business." " I must work the work of Him that sent me, for the night cometh when no man can work."

*There was in Christ a love that never languished.* He came to earth with a heart full of love, and it flowed forth to all men. Christ's love was never chilled ; the Divine fountain was never dry. Love indited His sermons, opened His lips, and spoke to mankind. Love kept alive His energies, and prompted Him to every noble deed and benevolent action. The servant must be as his master and love at all times. The light must never be dim, the fire must never go out.

*There was in Christ a diligence that never wearied.* One day He battled with the foe : another day He instructed the ignorant : another day He reproved the sinner : another day He preached to the multitude : another day He conversed with the individual. The active life of Christ was continuous and life long. He began His Father's business early ; but each day witnessed the fervour of His devo-

tion, the energy of His life, and the benevolence of His actions. He rose early, toiled through the day, and spent nights in prayer: In the quiet of the village, and din of city life, His voice was heard. Every case of distress found a refuge in His heart. He healed the sick; raised the dead; and comforted the mourner. Like the sun at evening He went down, but like the sun in the morning He arose again to shine as the light of the world. He was often faint and tired, but never weary in doing His Father's will. The Lord's workers must be like Christ, never weary in well doing; but always abounding in the work of the Lord.

*There was in Christ a resolution that was never daunted.* Every form of opposition met Him in His way. Foes sought to turn Him aside from His mission and His life purpose. He was met by hard speeches. He was treated with contempt. He was depreciated in character. New trials arose every day—the betrayal of Judas; the denial of Peter; the rudeness of the populace; the mock trial of the magistrates; the lonely garden; the judgment hall; the cross of suffering and death; but Christ never stopped nor turned aside. He resolved before the night came to finish the work of His Father. Half-heartedness is failure, half-heartedness is ruin. We, like Jesus, must hold fast our faith and work on. We must enter His service and daily labour by the power of a renewed and Divine life. Christ felt that He had a great work to do, and only a short time to do it. He knew that He had a day's work to do, and only a day in which to do it. The night was fast hastening when He said "I must work the work of Him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work." Life is a day, and a day of short duration; a day that is crowded with opportunities of usefulness; but it will soon be over. The day of life may suddenly close; and the night may unexpectedly come. There is the dark night of death and the long night of the grave. When the dark shadows of night fall upon us, time cannot be recalled,

errors cannot be corrected, deficiencies cannot be supplied. The thought of coming night is not to chill our hearts, but to quicken our motion and hasten our steps. Servant of the living God make the most and the best of life's day! Hasten on your Father's business, and finish His work; for the night cometh!

*The life of Christ is the example for our imitation.* We must catch His spirit, trace His steps, follow His example. What Jesus did when He was on earth we must do now He is in heaven. The will of the Father must be the rule of our life; and the business of our Father the employment of our days. The importance of the work must engage the energy and perseverance of our being. We must not be dark, and cold, and selfish; but we must walk in the light, be zealous in the service of God, and labour for souls. We must press all we can of real life and earnest work into each day, and leave no reason for regret nor cause for unpleasant memories. Let the living example of the Son of God be a reproof of our indolence, a motive for our consecration, and a reason for our holy enthusiasm.

Come, let us anew our journey pursue.

Roll around with the year,  
And never stand still till the Master appear.

O that each in the day of His coming, may say,  
I have fought my way through,  
I have finished the work Thou didst give me to do.

O that each from his Lord may receive the glad word,  
Well and faithfully done;  
Enter into my joy, and sit down on my throne.

## Echoes of the Bible.

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### XI.

#### THE FIRST COMMANDMENT; OR, FOLLOWING JESUS.

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"Follow Me." Matt. iv. 19. "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Mark viii. 34. "Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed Thee," Luke xviii. 24. "Will ye also be His disciples?" John ix. 27.

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Christ Jesus came into the world to make disciples, and to place Himself at the head of a new society. Before His inaugural baptism in the Jordan, and His battle of temptation in the wilderness, He was alone, a solitary man in Nazareth. John announced the coming of Christ to the crowds that flocked to the scene of his ministry, and he declared the nearness of His reign and the necessity of amendment. He said, "*Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" But it was for Christ to clear the space He intended to occupy, and to call the men He designed for His fellowship. He emerged from His obscurity and was inaugurated into office at the Jordan, under the approving sanction of God. The voice from heaven said, "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" He achieved a threefold victory over the devil in His thrice repeated assaults in the wilderness, and cleared the way for His open mission. All things were ready, and Christ commenced His ministry. He began to preach and to say,

*"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* In the words of Jesus there was the free use of imperatives. His opening message to mankind was a command, *"Repent."* He did not invite men to His society and fellowship, but He gave them injunctions. Christ Jesus said to Simon Peter and Andrew his brother, *"Follow Me."* To James and John He said, *"Follow Me."* He saw Levi sitting at the receipt of custom, and He said also unto him, *"Follow Me."* The same command was given to other men in His own time, and His words are still in full force.

The first commandment of Christ was somewhat abrupt : walking by the sea of Galilee He saw the brethren pursuing their ordinary occupation, and He bade them follow Him. There was no preface, no explanation, but concise, plain, and authoritative words were at once addressed to them—*"Follow Me."* Christ's words are not like acts of parliament, nor like rules of social societies ; they are few, plain, and imperative. They are so few that the most defective memory can retain them, and so plain that the average mind can understand them. The obligation of obedience is binding, and against His law there is no appeal. No duty is imposed that is beyond the power of man to perform. The law of life is addressed to man's understanding, for his discipleship must be intelligent. It is addressed to his will, for the service must be free and voluntary. It also speaks to his heart, for Christ must have the affections. Love must be the moving power and the actuating principle of life. Genuine discipleship is not a round of duties, but supreme love of Christ and obedience to His words, *"Follow Me."*

*The first disciples were called to follow a visible person.* They heard His voice and they could touch Him. From place to place they could follow Him, to witness His works, to hear His words, and learn the lessons of His life. There was no command for subscription to a creed, nor the reception of a dogmatic theology. It was the call to imitate and follow the

highest form of life. This is what the heart longs for and what the heart delights in. The disciples found in Jesus Christ all that their souls desired. The call of Christ differs from the call of the church. Christ commands men to follow Him, the church calls to the belief of doctrines, the reception of creeds, and the adoption of orders, rites, and ceremonies. The voice of Christ must be heard, and not the church; the life followed, and not the mandates of men.

It is easy to understand what was meant when the disciples were first called to follow Christ. They were to leave their homes, friends, and occupations, and to be the friends and companions of Christ. From place to place they were to accompany Him, and learn their duty in His school. They could assure themselves of His nearness and abiding presence. But the bodily presence of Christ is now withdrawn from earth, and He is now enthroned at the right hand of God. How then can we obey the call and follow Jesus? It is hard to understand the presence of a spiritual Christ, and to follow an invisible person. Christ is present though unseen, for He has said, "*Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*" He fills all space and He lives through all time. We have more to depend upon than a dream, or memory of the past. We may trace Jesus in the written word, hear His voice in the gospel, feel His presence in our experience, follow His example by imitation, and confess our faith and love before men. The more we increase in spiritual perception the more we shall rejoice in the absence of a localized incarnation, and the universal presence of a divine Sonship. Jesus is at the right hand of God, but the right hand of God is everywhere. We have not to ascend into heaven to bring Christ down, nor to descend into the deep to bring Christ up. No pilgrimage need be performed, no special spot need be visited, Christ is here, He is everywhere, and we may follow Him in faith, affection, confession, and life.

Christ called men, not women, to follow Him. The

gentle, tender, and affectionate nature of women responded to His love, and they became the most ardent and devoted disciples. He called men, and these from lowly life. Men of humble rank first heard His voice, and they were the first elevated to His friendship and favour. He raised them from the lowest rank to the highest dignity. Fishermen were the first members of the new society and the first to take action in His service. Christ is no respecter of persons ; His call is universal. He speaks to all ranks of men, and to men of all ages. He says to the world "*Follow Me.*" Christ claims for Himself kingly right, and resolves to be the lawgiver and leader of religious society. All human legislation is interference with His divine rights. All human leaders are set aside, for no man has any religious authority over the conscience and the life of his fellow man. Jesus, and Jesus only, is King, Lawgiver, and Leader. There are many rival claimants to the faith and obedience of men. True, authorities have legislated, ecclesiastics have issued decrees, opposing sects have pressed their claims, masters have striven to coerce, parents have exercised authority, and friends have endeavoured to persuade, but Christ's voice must be heard and Christ's law obeyed. "*Follow Me.*" Magistrates may be defied, ecclesiastics may be set at nought, masters may be resisted, parents may be disobeyed, and friends rejected when they come between the soul and obedience to Christ. For loyalty to human authority may be disloyalty to the Son of God. The claims of Christ are well founded, they are based upon divinity and sovereign right, therefore He says to universal manhood, "*Follow Me.*"

Self-sacrifice and self-surrender are demanded as the test of discipleship. "*Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.*" There is truthfulness and honesty in Christ's words. Man is not allured by false promises and gilded baits. He panders to no human lust ; He grants no personal indulgence ; His teachings and

His demands go against the current of depraved nature. To sustain a high Christian character is not easy, and to follow Christ is hard. To reach heaven we have to walk the path of difficulty. The maxim of Christian life is, "no cross no crown." The expressed terms of discipleship are self-denial and cross bearing. When Christ bid the disciples to follow Him, they were to relinquish all for His sake; and before they entered upon their mission He foretold the troubles that were looming in the distance as their lot; "*I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.*" "*Beware of men.*" All that Jesus told them of trial was verified to the letter. They stood before councils, and they were scourged, they were brought before governors and kings for the sake of Jesus. Trial was not the lot of the disciples alone. To name the name of Christ was the signal for opposition. "*Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.*" Home opposition would be excited, the ties of nature broken, and a cross through life be borne. Christ was not the cause of the trouble, but it was the effect of embracing Christ's religion and confessing His name. Opposition and persecution have their origin in the depraved heart, and the bitter hate of the enemies of Christianity. We are not now called to make the same sacrifice for Christ as in the early days of Christianity, nor do we experience the same persecution for Christ's sake. There are trials to endure and there is a cross to bear, and we must deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Jesus. We must deny ourselves of our own opinions, and bow in all things to the word and the authority of Christ. All worldly advantage must be given up if it stands in the way of loyal obedience to Christ. The quiet and ease of home must be surrendered to the calls of Christ, for activity and devotedness in His service. Worldly honour must be given up for the glory and honour of Jesus. The cross that is appointed we must carry. Not a traverse beam upon our shoulders, but a burden upon our hearts; doing and suffering what is hard to human nature,

and what is uncongenial to human feelings ; shame, pain, and disgrace must be endured for Jesus' sake. We must boldly profess our faith and patiently endure our trials. Our cross taken up, not passed by, not leaped over, but taken up and carried after Jesus. Life is progressing, and we must move on. Jesus leads the way and we must follow Him. We must not run before Him, but be very near Him, and follow hard after Him.

The principle laid down by Jesus is necessary, and the requisition is just. We are altogether out of the way by apostacy and the corruptions of our own nature. To follow our own opinions and to pursue our own course would be our ruin. We must therefore be wrought in a different mould and into a different form. The carnal must be given up for the spiritual, the earthly for the heavenly, the temporal for the eternal. He that has none of this principle is no Christian, and the more we have of it the more Christian we are ; the higher we rise in Christian attainments the greater our moral dignity, and the greater our felicity in heaven.

In gratitude and in loving imitation of Christ we must deny ourselves and take up our cross. Jesus gave up much for us, we must give up something for Jesus. "*He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor.*" He endured trial and carried a cross, and on the tree of torture he died for us. All that we now have, all that we hope for, and all we shall enjoy in heaven, is traced to His cross, and suffering, and death. He has set us the example, and He bids us make the return. Give Him, therefore, sacrifice for sacrifice, heart for heart, life for life. "*Whoever will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.*"

The disciples responded to the call of Christ and followed Him. "*Lo, we have left all and followed Thee.*" Peter and Andrew "*Straightway left their nets and followed Him.*" James, and John his brother, "*Immediately left the ship and their father, and followed Him.*"

Matthew and Philip forsook all and followed Jesus. There was no questions about doctrines, and beliefs, and church order. Their discipleship was an act of faith and love to a person, a faith of a most simple and child-like kind. They had no doubts; they had no fears; they asked no questions; they did not hesitate nor delay. Immediately they forsook all and followed Jesus. Christ was soon at the head of a few disciples; and laid the foundation of a new society.

*"Peter said, we have left all and followed Thee."* He speaks for Himself and he speaks also for others. The sacrifice of the disciples appears at first sight but small; only a few nets and boats. Sacrifice is not to be estimated by the amount given up, but by the principle involved. A thousand pounds may be given as a munificent donation to the cause of benevolence without being felt as a sacrifice, but a penny cast into the treasury may leave wants and necessities without the means of supplying them. A man may give an estate from principle, but there may still remain vast possessions in bank and bonds. A cottage may be surrendered for conscience sake, and the man be left in homeless penury. Noble sacrifices have been made for Christ and for Christianity. Father, mother, brother, sister, houses and lands, have been forsaken to follow Christ. Every kind of privation and suffering have been endured in the holy walk of true discipleship. History has described the sufferings of the followers of Christ. The apostles were rudely assaulted, unjustly imprisoned, cruelly scourged, and wickedly put to death. Confessors have languished in prison cells, martyrs have died at the stake, spirits have forced their way through the chinks of prisons upward to the home of rest. The great multitude now before the throne of God came out of great tribulation. Associations failed to bind them, trials failed to depress them, death had no power to alarm them. Through a fiery passage they walked, and through painful portals they passed home. Our trials are not equal to those of the saints of early days, but even now

there is a cross for every one. If a man will live godly he must suffer persecution. "*It is through much tribulation that we enter the kingdom of heaven.*"

The declaration of Peter implies decision for Christ. This decision of character was the result of faith and love. Faith is mighty, it rules the conscience, regulates the affections, and controls the life. Love draws the soul into fellowship, and prompts to patient suffering and persevering service. Here is the confession of faith and love, plain, honest, and outspoken. We must never be ashamed of Jesus and His cause; before men we must boldly declare our faith.

Peter was only one of a noble band of confessors. Men of firm faith and steady purpose were with him. Though the number of disciples was small in the beginning, they multiplied, for the word of God grew and prevailed. All ages have contributed to the increase of disciples and the extension of religious society. Christians are now legion. In all ranks of society, in every age of life, in every shade of intellect, disciples are found. Tens of thousands are now in the church of which Christ is founder and head. Millions are now in heaven as the firstborn, but the work of discipling will go on until the last sinner is saved and the last saint is glorified.

An urgent question is now addressed to you; "*Will ye also be His disciple?*" A disciple is a listener, a learner, a scholar, a Christian, a follower of Christ; one who believes Christ's doctrine, imbibes His Spirit, and imitates His example, believes all that Christ has revealed, does what He commands, avoids what He forbids, suffers what He permits, and waits for what He has promised. Such an one is a true disciple, and only He is a Christian. "*Will ye be His disciple?*" John had many disciples, but the question is will ye be a disciple of Christ, not of John: a follower of the Saviour and not of man? There are many human leaders and diversified teachers of religion, they ask for credence and for fellowship, and for ecclesiastical association. We ask, will ye be a

disciple of Christ? There are many followers of Christ, will you make another? Will you increase the number by joining the ranks? There is a personality in the question, "Will you" be a disciple? will you come out of the world and separate yourself from the vile, and yield yourself to Christ? Sinner, formalist, worldling, wavering, backslider, will ye be his disciples? Will you, young man, in the morning of life, in the period of health and energy, be his disciple? Will ye who have reached the midday of life, or advanced to even-tide, will ye be His disciples? Sons of wealth and victims of poverty, men of intelligence and men unlettered, will ye also be His disciples? In enlightened faith, in warm affection, in deep humility, in open confession, in daily deportment, in every place and every day, "*Will ye also be His disciples?*" His disciple, not a sham; a genuine coin and not a counterfeit. Will ye be His disciple? The call is Christ's, the response is yours. There are no pressed men. no forced disciples; men are drawn, not driven; they are invited, not compelled. Wisely use your liberty, take up your cross, and follow Jesus.

Of the fact of our discipleship we must give full proof. Hugh Lattimer says, "As every lord giveth a certain livery to his servants, our Saviour, who is Lord above all lords, would have His servants known by their badge, which is love." "To prevent confusion," says a living author, "and to secure a defined place in society, each office and every class has its peculiar sign. The crown is the sign of the king, and the sword is the sign of the soldier." Jesus decreed that His disciples should have their proper sign, a sign that should outlive all others, and should be understood in every language; "*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye love one another.*" "Follow me," is the first commandment of Christ, "Love one another," is the second and the abiding law of His society. Not by pious looks and prating words, not by a place in a sect and the observance of ceremonies, but by love to Christ and love to them that love Christ, by kind words and timely

help and mutual sympathy, "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples." This life the world will admire; and this life more effectually than pulpit eloquence and platform oratory, will win souls to Christ. This life-gospel we must live before all people, then shall we disciple all nations.

There are many inducements to discipleship. The disciples that left all to follow Jesus expected compensation. Peter said, "*We have left all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore?*" The disciple expects reward as the labourer expects his wages. The expectancy is natural and is just. There is adequate compensation promised for every sacrifice and service of Christ. "*Verily I say unto you, there is no man that has left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.*" There is the shady side of discipleship in sacrifice and surrender, and there is the sunny side in promise and in reward. We may not receive in compensation the same kind and to the same extent as that which we may sacrifice for Christ, but we shall receive a full equivalent. There may be temporal loss, but there will be spiritual gain. In peace, and power, and honour, and hope, and fruitfulness, we may receive manifold more in this present time. Rewards in part preceed heaven. To live a Christian life is gain; to die a Christian's death is gain. In the world to come it is life everlasting—eternal gain. Death does not terminate our happy being; it interrupts the present to introduce us to the happy and eternal future. For every trial here there is distinct recompense there. For every disgrace here there is a distinct ray of glory there. For every sorrow here there is an exuberant cup of pleasure there. "For they shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat." From all the trials of earth they shall be for ever free, and shall share a plenitude of blessing with Christ Jesus for evermore. "For the Lamb

which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of water, and God Himself shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." This is heaven, and this is the disciples reward.

"Will ye also be his disciples?" Do not reject the urgent inquiry. Ponder seriously over the personal question. In the strength of Christ decide wisely. Let not fear keep you back, nor let trial deter you; make your choice, and make it now. There is no authorised religious neutrality—"He that is not for me is against me." Almost disciple, decide now for Christ, delay not or it may be too late. If you be ashamed of Him now He will be ashamed of you when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels. Deny Him and He will deny you, confess Him and He will confess you.

Timed disciple, be of good cheer, fear not the trials by the way. Be not cast down by the burden of your cross. Keep close to Jesus, He will give you daily strength for daily need. The cross He will help you to bear. Look less at your weakness, and more at the source of your strength: look less at the sufferings you bear, and more at the rest that awaits you. Look to the recompense of reward and go without the camp bearing the reproach.

Mistaken disciple, think not of reaching heaven by following inclination and worldly maxims. Expect not to reach home without a sacrifice and a cross to carry. Here we must suffer with Him if we would reign with Him. The lot of the master is also the lot of the servant: and marvel not if the world hate you, it hated Christ before it hated you. Your sufferings are here, but your reward is hereafter.

Steadfast disciple, continue to be firm and bold in your professions of Jesus. Follow your Divine leader. Be steadfast in the faith: be faithful unto death: think, speak, and act for Jesus. In life's latest hour confess Him. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

A closing word we must give to those who are not disciples. You have heard the command of Christ, "Follow me:" and you have heard of the test of discipleship--"Whosoever will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." You have heard of the decision of men on the side of Christ; and to you has been addressed the urgent question, "Will ye also be His disciple?" You have heard of the reward of those who follow Jesus; the manifold compensation now, and the eternal life in the world to come. You are not a disciple, and for you there is no reward. Who will receive the recompense? Not you. Who will sit on thrones of honor with Christ in heaven? Not you. Who will be happy for ever, and sing eternal praises to Christ the heavenly Lamb? Not you. On this side heaven's gate you will stand, shut out, self-excluded, for you would not follow Jesus. Now hear the voice of the Son of God, "Follow me." Obey that voice, and take up your cross and follow Him. Decide for Jesus that your name may be registered among the followers of the Lamb.

## Echoes of the Bible.

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### XII.

#### THE BLESSEDNESS OF OBEDIENCE ; OR, THE REWARD OF GOOD WORKS.

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Behold, I come quickly : blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. Rev. xxii. 7.

And, behold, I come quickly : and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. Rev. xxii. 13.

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. Rev. xxii. 14.

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The words of Christ are stamped with special interest, for they are words that teach and words that profit. Many sayings He uttered when on earth, and many more He added after His ascension and enthronement. To His revealing words we must listen, and the utterances of the great King we must obey. Let us therefore ask of the Lord a clear understanding of His word, and the true spirit of obedience.

*We have before us the teachings of the heavenly King. The sayings of the Lord are written in "this book." Christ revealed*

His mind to the angel, and the angel revealed it to John, and the apostle wrote the mind of his Lord and sent it to the churches. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His Angel unto His servant John; who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw." The book contains a revelation of the things that have been, the things that are, and the things that shall be. God's disclosures make known what man could not discover, but what his intelligence approves. Hidden things are brought to light by the divine communications, and what was concealed has been made plain. The book is a revelation of Jesus Christ; of His person, of His glory, and of His kingly reign. It is a revelation of the mind of Christ, of His instructions, of His intentions, of His laws, and of His promises.

*The absolute sovereign has revealed his mind to mankind.* The words of Christ, the King, are written in the divine book. The doctrines from heaven are many and various, and they are designed for the instruction of the mind and the regulation of every day life.

*Christ declares the fact of His second advent.* For a short time He had been separated from His people on earth, and they had experienced the pain of parting, but He plainly declares that He shall come again. "Behold, I come quickly," and He repeats the affirmation, "And; behold, I come quickly." This was the last promise that fell from His lips; "I will come again." It was also the last declaration made to His anxious disciples; "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner."

manner as ye have seen Häm go into Heaven;" These are the last revelations that close the book, "Behold, I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophesy of this book." "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." 'Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.' The advent of Christ is drawing nearer, and He will soon come. The time is unknown, for it is one of God's secret things. But the time is appointed, and though He seems to tarry, He will come quickly. The time is long to man; but it is short with God. A thousand years are only as a day with Him. Time is speeding on and every moment brings Him nearer. We may depart and sleep for ages in the quiet grave, but we shall one day be called to meet Him. Events are transpiring beneath His rule and preparing the world for His advent. The sounding of trumpets, the breaking of seals, the pouring out of vials, are preparing the way for His coming. He is coming quickly to subdue His enemies, to banish His foes, to collect His saints, and to people heaven.

*Christ is coming to reward every man according to his works.* On His first visit to the world He came to teach men the doctrines of His religion and to die as a propitiation for the sins of the world; but His second advent will be without a sin offering. He will come to judge the world in righteousness; to condemn or to acquit: to punish or to reward. In that day He will be vested with authority, armed with power, and laden with blessing. All the resources of God and eternity will be at His command. Upon the righteous He will bestow His kingly favour, and upon the unrighteous His heaviest curse. He will display a benevolence richer than that which filled heaven with angels, and justice stricter than that which

punished devils. Every Christian shall have his full reward. The man that believed in Christ, that loved Christ, that worked for Christ, that waited for Christ, "shall be rewarded according as his works shall be." Millions shall rise from their graves in that great day, but not one shall be overlooked, nor shall one be forgotten. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Untold millions shall stand before God. "The sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." Each man shall receive the reward of righteousness or the wages of sin. The smallest service for the Master shall be acknowledged and compensated. The cup of cold water given to a disciple, and the prison visit shall have their reward. Works done in the name and spirit of a disciple are done for Christ. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me." "Well done thou good and faithful servant" shall be the plaudit of the Master. The length of service and the extent of usefulness shall be acknowledged by the judge in the last day. Every man rewarded according to his works. The talent employed shall receive interest; the one talent improved shall be made two, the five ten, and the ten twenty. It is the reward of proportion and degree. Men, like the stars in the heavens, differ in glory. The veteran servant of Christ shall rise higher, and have greater reward than the new born babe. All the faithful shall be in heaven, but the best servant shall be nearest the

throne of God. All shall be happy in heaven, but the most improved and largest capacity shall receive most of the fulness of joy that is at God's right hand. Impartial justice shall pass the sentence and fix the final lot of all mankind.

*The doctrine of the rewardableness of good works, does not rob Christ of His merit.* Christ died to save man from death. Christ has opened the kingdom of heaven to every believer. Christ offers eternal life to every sinner. All the honour and merit of the provision is Christ's, only the acceptance and improvement of the free gift rest with man. Human merit there is not in receiving and improving royal bounty.

*The doctrine does not ascribe to works what belongs to grace.* Grace first contrived the way to save rebellious man. It brought a Saviour from heaven; a gospel message to the ear; and a living power to the heart. Am I a christian? by the grace of God, I am, what I am! all the good works of life are the fruit of grace. And God looks at the fruit and is pleased with the fruit, and is glorified by the fruit, and honours and rewards the fruit wherever it is found.

*It does not make heaven a reward of merit instead of a free gift.* Heaven is a purchased possession. The first paradise was lost through the transgression of the first Adam, the second paradise is provided by Jesus the Lord from heaven. The conditions of entrance into glory are laid down by the Sovereign Lord. Compliance complete and entire is demanded. Man does not enter heaven by obedience to laws of human invention, but by obedience to the laws from heaven. This is the work of God, "that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." "Do good

to all men." "Watch and pray." "Be patient in tribulation." "Work in my vineyard." "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." "My reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

*Reward follows obedience to the divine commandments.* The laws of God are many, but they may be reduced to three. There is first the law of faith, or what we are to believe. We are called to believe the divine word, the divine Son, and the divine life. Faith must be in constant exercise, for by faith we must walk, by faith we must work, by faith we must fight, by faith we must suffer, and by faith we must die. Faith is a first duty, "For this is the work of God; that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." By faith we must live, "For we walk by faith and not by sight." Faith is a power, "For this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Faith underlies all our Christian obedience and prompts to every holy work. We show our faith by our works. It is faith that pleases God, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

*There is also the law of love.* This law is divided into two parts and is clearly written on two tables. The first is supernal love to God. "For thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment, and the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy

neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." God is to have the first place in our heart, and the creature must be loved in subordination to God. The law of love is to influence and direct all our actions; and there is no true and acceptable service but that which springs from love to God and love to man.

*There is also the law of works, or what we are to do.* "If ye love me keep my commandments." The book we have must be read, its sayings must be heard, and its precepts must be kept. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." We are first to read, then to hear, and then to obey. The law of God demands submission to authority, patience in tribulation, watchfulness in danger, constancy in devotion, diligence in labour, work in the vineyard, speed in the race of life, battle with the foe, and fidelity to the end: "Keep the sayings of the prophecy of this book." There are many duties to engage the life, and there is plenty of work for willing hearts and ready hands. True religion is a life of faith in practice and love in action. James, who was taught in the school of divinity, wrote the lessons of daily life: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." "Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." And Paul speaks of men "who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life."

There are many zealous workers in the Lord's service, and there are many works that engage the time and energies of the wise and the good. Some stand upon the highest platform of life and fill the widest sphere, for there are ministers, and statesmen, and philosophers engaged in the glorious labours

of the Lord, they are seen, admired, and honoured in their work of faith and love for Christ. There are many hidden workers, men and women that the world knows nothing of, their names are written in pale ink. Each man in his allotted place is doing something for Christ, and shall be rewarded for his work.

*There is unbounded happiness in an obedient life.* "Blessed is he that readeth." "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings." "Blessed are they that do His commandments." Here a threefold benediction falls from the lips of Christ. The soul that is in harmony with God and obedient to His word must be happy. Where there is sin there is fear, and where there is fear there is torment. The obedient child, conscious of a father's smiles, is happy. The servant that has done his full day's work can lie down at night with a quiet conscience and take his rest. As cause and effect are connected, so sin and sorrow are linked together, and holiness and happiness go hand in hand. Service for the Lord brings its full reward. Faith gives a sense of security, and conscious security is the parent of bliss. Love to God is a well-spring of joy. Where there is love there is heaven. The more perfect our love, the greater will be our felicity. Love in the heart here is heaven in miniature, and the perpetual joy of heaven is perfect love. Every good work yields its reward; for in every act of kindness performed in the name of the Lord there is pure pleasure. The smallest service for the glory of God is productive of compound interest. We listen to the word of God and we grow wiser. We obey that word and we grow better. We engage in any department of the Lord's service and we reap a rich harvest, strength to labour, support in trial, comfort in distress, consolation in death, and sweet rest in heaven.

*There is a future reward for the faithful servants of Christ.* The long exiled from the first paradise shall be admitted to a state of which the first paradise could not boast. "They shall eat of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God." "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city." A city is a sight of interest. Millions have trodden the streets of our great London and gazed, and wondered, and admired. There is a better city for the saints, "The holy city, the new Jerusalem." Bunyan represents his pilgrims, Christian and Hopeful, at the city gate. Over the gate is written, in letters of gold, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Each man presents his certificate, the King approves, and commands the door to be opened, saying, "He that keepeth truth may enter in." "I saw in my dream," says Bunyan, "that these two men went in at the gate." What would they see? A glorious city, far exceeding in beauty and extent the metropolis of any land. Whom would they meet? The great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; the sinless angels, and the good from every land; they shall meet the whole family of God. How will they be engaged? They will serve God day and night in His temple, and know neither weariness nor decay. What shall they enjoy? Freedom from sin, freedom from pain, freedom from sorrow, freedom from death. They shall have the smiles of God, the supplies of love, and the joys of purity. Fulness of joy, and pleasure for evermore. How long shall they abide? For ever. For ever with the Lord. Never more to leave the city. Immor-

talities, eternal life is to be enjoyed. Safe, for ever safe. Joy without measure and joy without end !

*There are men outside the city gate ; self-excluded men.*

"For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." "No thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, shall inherit the kingdom of heaven." "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth ; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." The righteous and the wicked live together here, but hereafter they are parted for ever. No change shall take place in character nor destiny after death and judgment. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still : and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still : and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still : and he that is holy, let him be holy still." It is a solemn thing to die ; but it is a far more solemn thing to live. There is the pain of parting, the separation of soul and body, and the separation from earth and friends. There will also be the entrance upon an unknown and untried world. But our future lot depends upon our present character. Our state in eternity is determined by what we make of life. We take our character with us, and our reward will be according to our works. Here is a loud call for decision of character, and consecration to God and Christ. Here is a motive to Christian diligence, for every service for Christ shall have a full reward. Here are words that prompt to virtue and religion ; and words that should deter from vice. All sinners "shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone ; which is the second death." For heaven there must be a title and a meetness. Our title is justification by faith ; our meetness is regeneration.

by the Holy Ghost. Our place in glory is determined by our works.

Christ is coming to reward the faithful and to admit the obedient through the gates into the city, that they may for ever be in His presence, to share His glory and His joy. None but the active and devoted servants of Christ will be there. Not the man that has declared his faith in a sound creed, that has been loud in his professions of piety, who has been enrolled with the faithful in fellowship, that has been regular in attendance upon the ordinary means of grace, but has never exhibited the fruits of faith and love, never did a noble and generous deed for Christ's sake, never wrestled with the foe, never toiled for the extension of the kingdom of Christ, never sought to win souls to Jesus. He sought and he shared the privileges of religious life, but shirked the labour and energy that Christ demands. For such there is no high destiny, no hearty words of approval, no rest and no blessedness in heaven. Faithful servant of the living Christ, no work for Him is lost, no act and deed for Him is forgotten; your labour here may be underrated, but the register is on high, and your full reward shall follow.

Christ is coming, "Come, Lord Jesus, and come quickly," is the response of the redeemed and faithful millions of the church. Let not Thy chariot wheels delay, hasten, my Lord, and come! "Come, Lord Jesus." Reason says come. There are mysteries around us, mysteries in providence and grace we cannot solve. "Come, Lord Jesus," disperse the clouds, clear up the difficulties, make Thy ways plain to our understanding and our heart. "Come, Lord Jesus." Justice says come. Vice is lurking in secret places and undermining the good; pride is lifting up its haughty head and looking on

Thy people with disdain. Cruelty is marching through the land and persecuting and oppressing the saints, indifference is sleeping, while some are perishing for lack of knowledge. Indolence is sitting at ease, while men are crying, "no man careth for my soul." Impiety is bold and reckless, and piety is depressed and bleeding in our streets. "Come, Lord Jesus," ascend Thy throne in righteousness. Come, Thou judge of all the earth, and do what is right. "Come, Lord Jesus." Piety says come, and come quickly. Here is the strong expression of abiding confidence, the warm and hearty feeling of a loving mind, the high expectation of a hopeful soul, the personal preparation of a regenerate heart, and the earnest desire of a prayerful spirit. Let us see Thy glorious face, hear Thine approving voice, and share a full reward with Thee in glory everlasting. The coming of a friend is an event of interest; we anticipate the time, we wait the hour, and we hail with joy the welcome arrival. Jesus is our best beloved friend, and He will soon be with us. "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Be at your post of duty, and diligently pursue your vocation, and your reward shall be given. "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace which is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

The great day of the saint's rejoicing will be the season of the sinner's sorrow. The rebel and the traitor have reason to fear the coming of the avenger. The prisoner in his cell trembles at the thought of his coming doom. In that day

there will be strange reversions, the last first, or the first last. The thoughtless, the indolent, and the inactive shall be cast away. "Then shall the King say unto them on His left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in ; naked, and ye clothed me not ; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not." The pleas of ignorance and indolence will not avail nor claim exemption in the day of the Lord. They shall answer, saying, "Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick and in prison and did not minister unto Thee ? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment ; but the righteous into life." Heaven may be lost for the want of the good works that spring from faith and love. Indolence may exclude the soul eternally from Christ and heaven. Men of reason, be also men of faith. Let your faith embrace all that God has spoken. Let your faith lead you to personal and entire consecration to the Lord and His Christ. Let your faith work by love, and your love in daily acts of obedience to the Lord's will. Do what He has bidden, and work and wait in patience until He shall come. Make your life sublime by faith and good works. Impress society with your noble and generous deeds. Let the world be better for your existence. Cause the young, the aged, the rich, the poor, the rejoicing, and the sorrowful, to call you blessed. With such service God is well pleased. He will remember your work of righteousness

wrought in His name and for His glory. He will register your name with the faithful servants, and pronounce you blessed in the day of Christ. With the myriad of christian labourers, victorious soldiers, patient sufferers, and faithful servants, you shall "enter in through the gates into the city."

## NOTICE.

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